The Indian Response to *Hamlet:*

Shakespeare's Reception in India and a Study of *Hamlet* in Sanskrit Poetics

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Dedicated to my Parents

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1. INTRODUCTION

Today Shakespeare is one of the most admired poets in India. He came to the country through the introduction of the English language by the colonial masters and was later naturalized. His plays have been widely adapted both on the stage and on screen in almost all the Indian languages (including English). The Indian response to Shakespeare has been very aptly described in a recent article by Sisir Kumar Das as:

> not only widespread, stretching over a vast region conspicuous by its linguistic and cultural diversities, but also of the longest duration so far as any other foreign writer is considered. The Indian engagement with Shakespeare that began almost from the initial phase of the Indo-British encounter and which continues still to-day, fifty years after the end of the Raj, is not simply an issue of literary history involving the problematics of influence and impacts, reception and survival, but an integral part of larger questions of politics and culture in a colonial situation.[1]

Of all the dramas of Shakespeare, *Hamlet* appears to be the most popular in India.[2] The popularity of Shakespeare in India makes it interesting to study the dramatist in general and *Hamlet* in particular. From the scholarly point of view, it might be particularly favourable to study *Hamlet* or any Shakespearean play for that matter, in the light of classical Sanskrit poetics. Such a novel interpretation would not only widen our scope of interpreting drama but would show that *Hamlet* which is normally typified as a tragedy, could fall into a different category altogether, from one of the seven categories of drama as delineated by Sanskrit poetics. The warm reception of *Hamlet* in India has motivated me to choose this particular play as a model for interpretation.

India and Shakespeare are correlated with a bond of colonialism as much as with a genuine aesthetic taste. Emily Eden wrote in her Letters from India, "the native

generation who have been brought up at the Hindu College are perfectly mad about Shakespeare. What a triumph for this dear creature!"[3] For Eden, Shakespeare's warm reception by the colonial intellectuals is a triumph for Shakespeare himself. This "triumph" suggests not merely Shakespeare's popularity in a foreign land; it also suggests the aesthetic qualifications of an Indian audience unwittingly acknowledged by an English lady.

The aesthetic qualifications of an Indian audience in the mid-nineteenth century might have been triggered by the cultural elements of a non-Indian (British) tradition. But the inherent aesthetic base of this Indian audience that must have been shaped by prior exposure to classical Indian/Sanskrit drama must also be acknowledged. Indian theatrical tradition was strictly dictated by the norms of Sanskrit dramaturgy delineated in the canonical theories of *rasa* and *dhvani* (to be discussed from chapter 5 onwards). So the aesthetic sensibility of Indian theatregoers, the majority of whom were not familiar with the canons of their own theatrical tradition was largely formed through exposure to the latter in an indirect manner. It is this passive influence of Sanskrit poetics and active influence of Sanskrit drama (their products) that created and nurtured this aesthetic sensibility in Indians. And because of this dramatic genius an Indian actor named Baishnav Charan Adhya could excel in playing the role of Othello with an English actress named Mrs. Anderson playing the role of Desdemona.[4] This event is unique in the cultural history of the British colonies in Asia at that time. The basic aesthetic qualifications of Indians are therefore unquestionable.

But what remains to be acknowledged is much more than the sensibility of Indians displayed in the theatrical performances and other appropriations. The

intelligentsia of modern Bengal, the students of the Hindu college (founded in 1816) were attracted by D.L. Richardsons's (who was also the founder of the Chowringhee Theatre) style of teaching Shakespeare, reciting and acting scenes from his plays along with critical appreciation, not because the style was anything novel to them but because it suited their inherent age old dramatic sensibility displayed in the great literary and theatrical tradition of classical India.[5] Thus, Bankim Chandra's comparison of *The Tempest* with Kalidasa's (4th century A.D.) *Shakuntala*, eulogizing the narrative skill of both the plays was an expression of a cultural confidence that in India the intellectual and aesthetic traditions are no less glorious than those of the British.[6] But none of them were aware of a great theatrical tradition of Sanskrit literature evident in the work of Bharata's *Natyasastra* (4th century B.C.) and the various commentaries written on this text between the 8th and the 10th centuries A.D. A literary or aesthetic culture becomes self-contained and full-fledged only when it formulates its own literary theory that evolves out of the prevailing practices as well as determines the standards and criteria of these practices by formulating norms and canons. Culture and canon are therefore reciprocal in the growth of an intellectual tradition.

Bankim Chandra's appreciation of Shakespeare in comparison with Kalidasa was based on his literary sensibility without any knowledge of the Indian tradition of dramatic criticism, particularly belonging to Bharata. Pioneering research was done by S.K. De and P.V. Kane on the history of Sanskrit criticism during the nineteen twenties, and other scholars like R.K. Yajnik continued their efforts in highlighting different aspects of this area since then.[7] During the nineteen fifties, Ramakrishna Kavi edited Bharata's *Natyasastra* with Abhinavagupta's commentary, several volumes of which were

published in Baroda.[8] At the University of Rome, Raniero Gnoli worked on two significant portions of Bharata's text with Abhinavagupta's commentary that contained the definitions of drama in the first chapter and the nature of the dramatic experience technically called *rasa* in the sixth chapter.[9] Thereafter, university professors in English wrote on different aspects of Sanskrit literary criticism viewed in the perspectives of English literary tradition. S.C. Sengupta is one of such pioneering scholars who published his book *Toward a Theory of the Imagination* where he juxtaposed chapters on Sanskrit critical theories with English ones.[10] His was the first attempt at appreciating *Hamlet* in the light of the *rasa-dhvani* theory, which is a pivot in Sanskrit critical tradition. Sengupta's pioneering scholarship opened a new avenue for interpretations of world literature in general and Shakespeare in particular, from the perspectives of Sanskrit traditional criticism. The cultural value of this approach is not confined to non- English or Indian audiences. It is equally valuable for the English audience in providing a critical insight that refreshes traditional readings, widening the scope and relevance of their own literary practices. This approach also encourages the critics of other traditions for an aesthetic reciprocation without any political prejudice.

But the avenue opened by Sengupta has so far, not been traversed as one might have expected. During the last three decades since his *rasa-dhvani* approach to *Hamlet*, no critic has ever tried to read other tragedies of Shakespeare in the light of this Sanskrit theory, nor has anybody tried to re-read the same play in the light of some other aspect(s) of Sanskrit dramatic criticism. Sengupta considers the emotion of aversion as the primary one, but it does not close the possibility of any other critic or audience to exercise his own sensibility. The present dissertation deviates from Sengupta's approach not so much

theoretically as hermeneutically. The tools handled are similar to those of Sengupta's i.e. the *rasa-dhvani* theory, but the workmanship differs. Using the same tools a different structure has been built. Agreeing with Sengupta that like any other drama viewed in the Sanskrit perspectives, *Hamlet* projects an emotion, I differ from him that this emotion is not aversion, but courage generating final sorrow.

Obviously, the present study requires a larger reach of imagination than what is needed in a monocultural literary practice. The gain from this intellectual study is undoubtedly profound; it avoids taking the local for the universal, the momentary for the constant and the familiar for the inevitable.

A comparative study of literature of different cultures promotes true multiculturalism. Translation of one culture into another (transculturality) is basically a desirable cultural practice that promotes human understanding. This, in turn requires the knowledge of the inter-relationship(s) amongst cultures (cross culturalism) and the examination of issue(s) common to human experience in the perspective of different cultural traditions. But it has been observed that in some cases, the principle of multiculturalism has been adopted hypocritically, as a policy necessity, in order to accommodate people of different cultures and races who are required to live together as a consequence of colonization or otherwise, but their cultures are not equally respected. Sukla in one of his recent papers observes how a comparativist gets involved with the problems of multiculturalism:

> The problem of a comparativist in translating a culture now gets involved with the problems of multiculturalism and secular criticism. The question of transculturality now depends upon the question of multiculturalism which has been associated recently with the question of ethnicity and Eurocentricism . Multiculturalism is basically a cultural policy adopted as a response to the evident multi-ethnic nature of contemporary Western societies which introduce their communities to the different belief systems, customs, arts and crafts of their nations' heterogeneous population. The policy of

> tolerance and respect for difference that this idea of multiculturalism implies, partially disguises an assumption of the centrality and dominance of the culture of the white ethnic groups. The recent origin of the idea refers to the relationship of English culture with those of Scotland, Wales and Ireland with particular reference to the status and funding of the Welsh language and culture. In their reaction to the values of English ideas of cultural pluralism and liberal humanism underlying the idea of multiculturalism, Jordan and Weedon propose different principles of culturality –those of antiracism, genuine dialogue and participation. The issue of multiculturalism thus is involved with the issue of transculturality, which in turn is involved with the interpretation of cultural terms, and as Edward Said has recently observed "culture has always hierarchies, it has separated the elite from the popular, the best from the less than best, and so forth."[11]

Thus, transculturality tends to disguise cultural domination. Erich Auerbach's belief that European culture could be viewed coherently and importantly as unquestionably central to human history is one of several instances of the attempts of Eurocentric culture to dominate over other cultures and of racial arrogance.[12] Multiculturalism can, however, be used healthily by way of negotiation, appropriation and reciprocation where the demarcation between the dominant and the dominated is abolished. Literary criticism from another culture should be "secular" as might be understood in the light of Edward W. Said as "a critical consciousness that attempts at founding an inherently representative and reproductive relationship between a dominant culture and the domains it rules."[13]

Any author or work of any culture can be appreciated by an "other" culture exercising freely its negotiative relationship. Comparative methodology, understood and accepted in the light of this view, opens vistas of critical approaches and aesthetic sensibility that will promote true multiculturalism. The present thesis is based on the ideals mentioned above, with no culture trying to dominate any other culture. Indian epics like the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* and other literary works of poets and dramatists like Kalidasa of the classic period (till 12th century A.D.) have gained less prominence in

world literature than those of Shakespeare. These works have not been adequately exposed in Western literary circles due to historical asymmetry. A true multicultural approach will result if those literary works are also analysed critically in the light of Western aesthetics in the manner I will analyse Shakespeare through classical Indian aesthetics in the present project.

Any intercultural study of Shakespeare will be rewarding in the present secular literary environment in India and in view of his popularity. The approach in this dissertation, as that of Sengupta, has nothing to do with any colonial politics. The political popularity of Shakespeare in India apart, *Hamlet* has been treated as a model for world literature. Therefore, this approach rests primarily upon a critical foundation that does not concern India's political relationship with Britain although this relationship has been instrumental in getting the play and its author acquainted with the Indian audience. Notwithstanding the centrality of the critical foundation, therefore, the dealing of this dissertation with political backgrounds has been peripheral.

In the second chapter, I take into account the introduction and growth of the English language and literature in the education system of India, during and after the colonial period, with special reference to Shakespeare. This account draws heavily upon the research done by Gauri Viswanathan and Jyotsna Singh. The introductory description shows that Shakespeare was an intellectual imposition upon, rather than a willing acceptance by the traditionally educated native Indians. This acceptance was subsequently naturalized as the British and Western values gradually dominated the attitude and activities of the educated Indians. The third chapter deals with the complex reception of Shakespeare in the theatrical and subsequently cinematic performances. It is

noted that Shakespeare was relatively more popular in the adaptations, than his original versions. The reasons of Shakespeare's popularity, particularly of *Hamlet*'s are discussed in the fourth chapter.

In the fifth chapter, the Sanskrit theories of *rasa*, *dhvani* and *rasa-dhvani* are outlined. In the next chapter (chapter six), which forms the central part of this dissertation, I dedicate a short section to a *Geeta* interpretation of *Hamlet*. I also present the theme and the structure of Sanskrit drama with illustrations from some of the principal texts such as Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*. Here, I consider it necessary to briefly sketch the plots of these Sanskrit plays, for my non-Indian readers, who might be unfamiliar with the Indian epics and legends. Simultaneously, I apply the Sanskrit theories of *rasa* and *dhvani* in studying *Hamlet*, where I dispute the earlier thesis of Prof. S.C. Sengupta. The concluding chapter examines the scope and limits of the comparative method followed in the present work.

2 ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE IN COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL INDIA

The reception of Shakespeare in India, particularly in academia, is intertwined with the introduction and growth of English language and literature in India. The role of traditional Indian education in the reception of the Bard is speculative, and I find scant material to suggest any striking correlation or to produce any conclusive evidence. Nevertheless, before entering a discussion of English education, I would like to give a short account of the existing education system in pre-colonial India, as a rightful contribution to my cross-disciplinary project.

2.1 Education in Pre-colonial India

A singular feature of ancient Indian or Hindu culture is that it has been moulded and shaped in the course of its history more by religious than by political or economic factors. "The fundamental principles of social, political and economic life were welded into a comprehensive theory which is called Religion in Hindu thought. The total configuration of ideals, practices, and conduct is called *dharma*[i] (Religion, Virtue or Duty) in this ancient tradition."[1] This *dharma* or religion played a vital role in all spheres of national life for ancient Indians. The Hindu view of life has always focused on the

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[i] The word *dharma* is one of the most intractable terms in Hindu philosophy. Usually *dharma* has been translated as religious code, righteousness, a system of morality, duty, charity, virtue etc. but none of these renderings can capture that special connotation in the original Sanskrit term. It means that which sustains or holds together different aspects and qualities of an object into a whole. It means not merely righteousness or goodness but the inherent nature of anything. As heat and light are the *dharmas* of the sun, a cold dark sun is impossible. Similarly in order to continue our existence as truly dynamic people of this world, we have to stay in the right path by remaining faithful to true natures. To avoid ambiguity I will adopt the most commonly used English translation of *dharma* i.e religion.

spiritual and the ideal as against the physical and temporal. Contrary to general belief, the Hindu thinkers have been eager to convert "nebulous ideals into determinate concepts, vague social attitudes into specific rules of conduct, and to envisage the group-life not as an indefinite aesthetic or romantic reality but as a system of laws."[2] The mode of adapting to group-life is not left to take its own turn through the raw impulses of every individual or through changing fashions. The ideals and values that the group conceives as supreme have to be clearly carved in the mind of the individual, and the aim can be realized through appropriate training of the bodily and psychic functions of each individual. This constituted learning in ancient India and continued through the ages until the British intervened and eliminated the entire system.

Learning in ancient India was cherished and pursued not for its own sake but as a part of religion. It was sought as a means to the highest end of life i.e. *mukti* or emancipation. The idea is that it is useless to grasp the knowledge of the whole through parts, through the individual objects making up the universe. Since the right way is directly to seek the source of all life and knowledge, the pursuit of objective knowledge is not the chief concern of this kind of education. Learning took place in a hermitage in the midst of sylvan surroundings, away from the din and bustle of urban life. The pupil had to leave home at a tender age and live with his teacher or *guru* and was treated by him in every way as his son.[ii] "The pupil was to imbibe the inward method of his teacher, the secrets of his efficiency, the spirit of his life and work as these things are too subtle to be taught."[3]

.[ii] While girls were allowed to receive education during the ancient period, their status gradually fell during medieval times and only the girls belonging to rich and aristocratic families had the privilege of receiving a sound education.

Education was free from the interference of the state as rulers who were not directly involved in educational matters but supported it through land and money grants.

Learning or education was by and large caste-oriented. The *Brahmanas* or *Brahmins* (highest in the caste hierarchy) studied the four Vedas (Hindu scriptures) with their auxiliaries: astronomy, astrology, materialistic philosophy, literature and the sciences. A *Kshatriya* (one belonging to the princely or warrior caste) studied the Vedas and learnt the arts of managing horses, elephants and chariots, of writing accounts and of waging wars. The *Vaishyas* (*traders*) learnt the arts of husbandry, merchandise and taking care of the cattle. The *Sudras* were expected to serve the upper three castes and to perform menial tasks. There was however, some scope for receiving education not prescribed for one's own caste by which one could change vocations and enter a different caste. While the immediate objectives of education, included preparation of individuals for their caste-based vocations, the ultimate objectives were self-realization and liberation of the soul.

There were advanced seats of learning or seminaries for students who wanted to pursue higher study after completing their basic education. The most famous among these were Varanasi, Taxila, Nalanda, Kanchi, Vikramshila, Vallabhi, Nadia, and Pushpagiri. Courses were offered in a wide variety of subjects like the study of the Vedas, sciences, medicine, surgery, archery, agriculture, philosophy, grammar, linguistics, rhetoric, logic, history, mythology, mathematics, political science, astronomy, fine arts, yoga and so on. Sanskrit poetics was a separate field of study but it received this special status at a period impossible to locate by historians.[4]

Such was the state of education in pre-colonial India. While this system was admired by some of the British colonialists, it drew severe contempt from others and was rejected as impractical and non-utilitarian.

2.2 Orientalism versus Anglicism

The British had first entered India through the East India Company, which was perhaps the world's first multinational corporation, having a wide global reach from Great Britain to China through India and the East Indies. Its focus of activity was in India. From trading, the company eventually entered into the direct administration of the whole country, which it had gradually acquired through various methods of intrigue and ploy. In the course of time, the company servants had become steeped in corruption and moral degradation and ruthlessly exploited the native material resources. They were prone to vices of all kinds and had amassed huge amounts of illicit fortunes in India. Consequently, the administration suffered. Their avarice and shameful misuse of power caused Britain to question the morality of its presence in India. The attitude and behaviour of the early administrators of the East India Company made some people worry about the permanence of the British rule in India. According to Charles Grant:

> The primary objective of Great Britain, let it be acknowledged, was rather to discover what could be obtained from her Asiatic subjects, than how they could be benefited. In process of time, it was found expedient to examine how they might be benefited in order that we might continue to hold the advantages which we at first derived from them….[Their] happiness is committed to our care.[5]

Thus self-interest gradually merged with a degree of idealism and the guiding force became political. Thus, Viswanathan writes, "however much parliamentary discussion of

the British presence in India may have been couched in moral terms, there was no obscuring the real issue, which remained political, not moral”[6].

This commingled sense of guilt and a strong desire to increase territorial control led among other things to the introduction of English literature in India through the important Charter Act of 1813. According to the 13th resolution, it was the moral duty of England to uphold the “interests and happiness” of Indian natives and to take steps “as may tend to the introduction among them of useful knowledge, and of religious and moral improvement.”[7]

Since as early as the mid-eighteenth century the British parliament had reservations about a commercial company constituting an independent political power in India. The Company was not answerable to the Crown according to Pitt’s India Act of 1784. Nevertheless, as more and more reports of the misdeeds of the Company officials came into light, Parliament gradually curtailed the powers of the Company through several bills and the paramouncy of the Crown was slowly established. The total power of administration was finally taken over by the Crown at a much later date when the first organized rebellion of 1857 against the British Rule was suppressed. This rebellion, described by the colonial historians as the “Sepoy Mutiny” but by the subsequent Indian nationalists as the “First War of Independence”, was a serious jolt to the colonial rule in India and led to a re-organization of the administrative system.

It may however be admitted that the administration under the East India Company was not totally insensitive to the welfare of the native subjects. Troubled by the depravity of their own administration which might have loosened their hold on the natives, Edmund Burke had recommended taking measures to “form a strong and solid security for the

natives against the wrongs and oppressions of British subjects resident in Bengal" in the year 1773.[8]

It was presumed by many that the key to an efficient administration lay in the proper understanding of Indian culture. Warren Hastings, the Governor General from 1774 to 1785, was quick to acknowledge this, and made efforts to re-awaken Indian culture and learning, and to make the natives aware of their own cultural heritage. This led to the unforgettable phase of the British rule known as the "Orientalist Phase." Warren Hastings candidly acknowledged that, "every accumulation of knowledge, and especially such as is obtained by social communication with people over whom we exercise a dominion founded on the right of conquest, it is useful to the state: it is the gain of humanity."[9]

Whatever the underlying motive, the immediate effect of eighteenth century Orientalism was beneficial. It revitalized the low morale of the Indians and produced literary scholars like William Jones, Henry T. Colebrooke, Nathaniel Halhed and Charles Wilkins who helped a great deal in reviving the ancient wisdom of the East.

Conspicuously, the leadership of this movement was mainly in the hands of Western scholars. The Indian Sanskrit scholars, by that time, had already retreated into a self-created shell of superstition and dogma as a means of protection against the onslaught of strong Islamic culture in the past several centuries. Any scholastic discussion was mainly confined to the Brahmins in certain religious centres like Varanasi, Puri, Kanchi and Dwaraka. Interaction with outside culture was positively discouraged. Muslims and Christians were treated by the Brahmins almost as "untouchables" and described as *mlechas* and *javanas*. This was somewhat parallel to the Christian concept of

heathenism with the difference that, while the Christian Evangelists tried to bring the "heathens" into the fold of Christianity, such conversion into the Hindu religion was not considered. The few native scholars in the aforesaid centres had no influence on the policy making process at the central level.

The Orientalist phase did not last long. The next Governor General was Lord Cornwallis, who took over in 1786. At that time the Government was facing a financial crisis and degenerated moral standards. It was convenient on the part of Cornwallis to accuse the previous Government's policies including the policy of cultural assimilation. He tried to bring about a radical change in the whole set-up and imposed English principles of administration and public behaviour. This gave birth to the "Anglicism" movement as opposed to Orientalism. Corwallis removed Indians from all-important positions and the easy contact between the rulers and the ruled was no longer possible. There rose an impenetrable wall of distinction between the colonialists and the colonized.

Anglicism, however, failed to find a strong foothold in Indian society. The two immediate successors of Lord Cornwallis, Lord Wellesley (1798-1805) and the Marquees of Hastings (1812-23) rejected the harsh policies of their predecessor and were politically astute enough to realize the beneficial effects of promoting native culture and oriental learning. The English administration perceived the necessity of maintaining an alliance with the Indian elite, partly to gain their favour and partly to rule the common Indian people through them, thus filtering the effects of foreign rule.

While the Charter Act in 1813 was passed introducing the English language and literature in public schools, the teaching of oriental languages and literature was also promoted, albeit freed, as much as possible, of their "undesirable elements." Several

schools and colleges were opened for native Indians, which were devoted to oriental language and literature. It was considered too early to introduce Western Science and English as the medium of instruction. This situation more or less prevailed in India during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. During this period, the Asiatic society based at Bombay was established (1804), which in subsequent years did a commendable job in projecting the cultural heritage of India.

Gradually the question arose of how Indians could be moulded to suit the British administrative needs. The need to reform the attitudes of Indians became a basic concern of the Government. Being firmly established in India by that time, the Government was completely aware of its own authority over the natives. Orientalism became steadily drowned by the huge wave of reform sweeping over the Indian multitude. Finally, Anglicism prevailed almost totally over Orientalism.

2.3 The Role of Christian Missionaries

The British initiated Christian missionary activities during the first decade of the nineteenth century through a group of dedicated missionaries called the "Clapham Evangelists" who were equally responsible for the replacement of Orientalism by Anglicism. The Government, however, always kept their activities in check because of the apprehension that any interference with the beliefs of Indians (both the "religious Hindus" and the "zealous Muslims") may provoke violent opposition impeding Britain's commercial growth. The administration was quite conscious of the need to expose the Indians to the basic tenets of Christianity, which was felt to go a long way in reforming them morally and intellectually. Simultaneously, it was also realized that Western

sciences could not be imparted to the Indian people without tampering with their religious convictions due to the belief that in Hinduism, all knowledge is incorporated in religion. Thus, a delicate balance was to be maintained.

This dilemma was partially resolved by the introduction of English literature through the Charter Act. This Act called for support to the "revival and improvement of literature, and the encouragement of the learned natives of India."[10]

This declaration led to a controversy about the literature that should be promoted. Although the term "revival" seemed to suggest, "oriental literature" there was widespread discontentment amongst the colonial intellectuals about the usefulness of promoting an apparently "non-utilitarian" system of education. These intellectuals were convinced of the superiority and rationality of European knowledge. Classical Indian literature that was cherished by the British in the early part of its rule, by 1820, drew only severe contempt. This is exemplified by the famous remark of Thomas Babington Macaulay that:

> a single shelf of a good European library is worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia. It is, I believe, no exaggeration to say, that all the historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanscrit language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgements used at preparatory schools in England.[11]

Macaulay was a great believer of the benevolence of British rule and was considered the architect of English education in India. His following remark reflected the thinking of the ruling class at that time:

> English education will train the natives "who are Indian in blood and colour" to become English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. These people will constitute a class who would in fact, protect the British interests and help them rule a vast and potentially unruly land.[12]

Thus, English education was felt necessary to perpetuate the British rule with the help of Indians, which otherwise would be difficult by a few British people in a vast country.

The Government was, however, more cautious and allowed the oriental seminaries to exist but removed the teaching of English from these institutions. Simultaneously, separate colleges were set up where English was the sole medium of instruction. The reason put forward was that, in the oriental seminaries, the students failed to speak fluent English since they had to learn three languages (their mother tongue, Sanskrit and English) simultaneously. Gradually, more and more funds were diverted from oriental colleges to modern English institutions leading to a progressive annihilation of native classical literature.

This development in the1830's triggered off criticism even amongst Englishmen. Horace Wilson and many other orientalists openly condemned this repression of oriental studies. Ironically, their voice was subdued by a group of Calcutta citizens led by Raja Rammohan Roy and the English watchmaker, David Hare, who demanded the instruction of English language and literature and requested a college imparting a European system of education and morale. The underlying motive behind this appeal was obviously self-advancement. A sound knowledge of English would make those Indians, who could achieve this, eligible for lucrative Government positions. In this opportune situation, Governor-General William Bentick proposed the English Education Act of 1835, on the advice of Macaulay. This Act made English the medium of instruction in the Indian curriculum, bringing about a radical change in the education system. It must, however,

not to be forgotten that English language studies had already seeped into Indian society, though in rudimentary stages, long before 1835.

English literary study assumed a new meaning with the opening of organized missionary activity in India. The famous Scottish missionary, Alexander Duff had arrived in India in 1829. He was instrumental in the alteration of the direction of English study. He and other Christian missionaries were of the view that mere British education, without prior religious instruction in Christianity, would not be able to make Indian students imbibe the British moral values. Duff went to the extent of ascribing the cause of the 1857 rebellion to the prevailing religious neutrality maintained by the Government. His maxim ran as follows; "as Christianity has never taught rulers to oppress, it will never teach subjects to rebel."[13]

Duff established his own institution, the Mission College at Calcutta in 1830 under the patronage of the Free Church of Scotland. In due course, the following books were introduced in his course of English literature: *Poetical Reader*, Cowper's *Poems*, Pollock's *Course of Time, Selections from Southey, Montgomery, Campbell and Wordsworth*, Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome*, Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination*, Young's *Night Thoughts*, Bacon's *Moral and Civil Essays* and *Advancement of Learning*, Whatley's *Rhetoric*, Schlegel's *History of Literature*, Hallam's *Literary History of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Foster's *Essays, Select Essays from the North British and Other Reviews* and several books from the London Tract and Book Society. The books prescribed in the Department of Theology were the *Bible*, Paley's *Natural Theology* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and those in Philosophy were Mill's *Logic*, Raid's *Inquiry and Essays*, Thomas Brown's Lectures, Abercrombie's *Intellectual*

and Moral Powers, Whewall's *Moral Philosophy,* Bacon's *Novum Organon,* Plato's *Dialogues* and Butler's *Dissertation on Human Nature*.[14]

The Christian missionaries established many more English medium schools and colleges in India, in subsequent years.

The Government schools, however, prescribed a different set of books in the literature course. The syllabus included books like Richardson's *Poetical Selections* (Goldsmith, Gray, Addison, Pope and Shakespeare), Otway's *Venice Preserved*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet, Othello* and *Macbeth*, Pope's *Iliad by Homer*, Milton's *Paradise Lost* (the first four books), Addison's *Essays*, Johnson's *Rasselas* and *Lives of the Poets*, Paley's *Moral Philosophy*, Goldsmith's *History of England*, Bacon's *Essays*, *Novum Organon and Advancement of Learning*, Malkin's *History of Greece*, Horace Wilson's *Universal History*, Adam Smith's *Moral Sentiments*, Abercrombie's *Intellectual Powers* and Whewall's *Moral Philosophy*.[15]

Conspicuously Shakespeare's works did not find place in Duff's initial selection of books, though he might have been represented to some extent in *The Poetical Reader*. Perhaps he was not considered religious enough to promote Christian morals. Prescription of his plays in the syllabi of Government schools may be considered as an attempt of cultural imposition since he (Shakespeare) was a cultural icon of British society.

Though the Government refused to yield completely to the pressure of the missionaries, they were getting less and less certain of the policy they had adopted towards the education of the Indian masses. The Marques of Tweeddale, Governor and Commander-in Chief of Madras (1842-48) advocated the same education system for

India as the lower classes received in England. According to him, both the Hindus and the Muslims in India had essential characteristics of immorality, sensuality, self-indulgence, corruption and depravity as the working class in England. Hence it was deemed necessary to impart more religious education (compared to the upper classes in England) to these "fallen" people in order to reform and "rescue" them and for the British Government to have control over them. The upper classes in England received a more classical education from which the less privileged classes were excluded. Classical education, in this context, meant a greater dose of literary and scholarly education, which would prepare them to fit better to the upper privileged ruling class.

The parallelism drawn between the English working class and the Indians gave rise to a fresh wave of doubt in the British administrative circles about their wisdom of avoiding direct religious education and proscribing the teaching of the Bible in Government institutions. It served to remind them of another English officer in the East India Company in the late eighteenth century, Charles Grant, who had strongly advocated introducing European education and Christianity as the only means of ensuring durability of the British rule in India.

In another development, the military department started supporting the views of the missionaries that mere study of European literature without the knowledge of Christian morals and values did not create loyalty to the British Government. Major-General Rowlandson summed up his opinion in the following words; "I have seen native students who had obtained an insight into European literature and history, in whose minds there seemed to be engendered a spirit of disaffection towards the British Government."[16]

More and more reports came of young men developing the new spirit of enquiry and showing contempt towards Christianity and their disbelief in the "great principles of natural religion."[17]

Slowly the Government started yielding to increasing pressure from Christian missionary and other lobbies. Missionary activities were encouraged and schools began imparting religious instruction in an indirect manner, in the name of teaching English literature and language. Officially, however, the policy of religious non-interference remained and the Bible was proscribed from the school and college curricula.

It must be admitted that although there seemed to be an apparent difference of opinion between the missionary and the secular Government institutions, both shared a common goal of inculcating Christian values among the Indians. The belief of English literature being a "vast repository of Christian values" helped the administrators to find "an ally in literature in promoting the superiority of British/ Christian culture under the guise of a liberal education."[18]

Although the missionaries would have preferred the introduction of the Bible in all educational institutions, they could not overrule the Government by imposing a fundamentally religious education. So, they were forced to compromise and concentrate on the inherent religious and moral values propagated in English literature. In the words of Reverend William Keane:

> Shakespeare, though by no means a good standard, is full of religion; it is full of common sense principles which none but Christian men can recognise. Sound Protestant Bible principles, though not actually told in words, are there set out to advantage, and the opposite often condemned. So with Goldsmith… and many other books which are taught in the schools…. [which] have undoubtedly sometimes a favourable effect in actually bringing them to us missionaries.[19]

Though many missionaries rejected such arguments, the general consensus was in favour of Shakespeare as a storehouse of Christian ethics and morals.

In the missionary seminaries native preachers were trained to spread the message of Christianity amongst the masses. This proved to be more difficult than anticipated. The native preachers were considered to be intellectually weak and failed to grasp the full meaning and principles of Christianity. But the European missionaries found it difficult to communicate with the native people because of their limited knowledge of native languages and lack of understanding of their thinking. It was therefore suggested that English education be given to the native preachers so that they gain access to "wholesome literature" and thereby improve their morals. But it was observed that many English educated Indian preachers were secretly hostile to these alien modes of thought and their notion of science. English literature proved to be only partially successful as a means of conveying the moral tenets and true principles of Christianity. There was a painful realization on the part of dedicated missionaries who had spent their lives in missionary work that any attempt of mass conversion to Christianity in India would prove to be futile.

However, it became evident in the course of time, to the surprise of many missionaries that English literature was more effective than Biblical instruction, in better understanding and accepting of the Christian faith. Reading Milton, Bacon, Locke, Abercrombie, Addison, Johnson and even Shakespeare, encouraged voluntary reading of the Bible for better comprehension. It was even claimed that converts to Christianity from Government colleges were no less than those from missionary institutions. Thus, English

literature provided a perfect symbiosis of two conflicting notions, religion and secularism.

It was interesting to observe that English studies assumed a “purer” form in India in the colonial period than in the mother country. Highbrow scholarly reading in England was giving way to the more popular form of reading, due to the increased level of literacy amongst the British masses. Reading no longer remained confined to the elite population in England. It therefore brought qualitative change to literature. In contrast, Indian society at that time provided an ideal setting for the cultivation of the “purer” form of English. The upper class Indians, both Hindus and Muslims, were traditionally educated in Sanskrit and Arabic or Persian respectively and the lower class was confined to the vernaculars. The study of English was confined to the upper elite class in India, which was influential and had full control over the lower classes. Thus educating the masses in English was unnecessary, as it would not reap much benefit for the colonial rulers. In the words of Charles Trevelyan, an eminent educationist, the educated Indians “speak purer English than we speak ourselves, for they take it from the purest models. They speak the language of the *Spectator*, such English as is never spoken in England.”[20] [iii]

[iii] Even today, one finds the colonial style of writing English, which is very pedantic in the courts and offices of India. This is very often derogatively remarked as *Baboo English* by the modern writers.

2.4 The Establishment of English and Shakespeare in India

As already mentioned, the literary curriculum in the Government schools in the mid-nineteenth century focused on Shakespearean tragedies like *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. Much emphasis was placed on the language and rhetoric of the plays. Memorization and recitation of certain scenes were common methods of learning Shakespeare for students. Shakespearean language and rhetoric were topics of discussion in literary societies, which were predominantly mimicry of British cultural values. The aristocratic Indians, while being encouraged to become surrogate Englishmen, were nevertheless reminded of their limitations in fully comprehending the "truths" of Western literature, owing to their cultural background. For the Indians, it was not simply the literature of the colonial masters but a means to attaining a higher cultural identity and breaking the shackles of obscurantist traditionalism. Thus, Jyotsna Singh notes:

> English literature was idealized by elite Indian nationalists, imbued with liberalism that saw "Bengal Renaissance" in the late nineteenth century as a rebirth or rediscovery of a heroic Hindu age under the progressive wings of English literature. Major literary figures like Iswarchandra Vidyasagar and Michael Madhusudan Dutt imitated English models such as Milton's vernacular epic to produce the genre of a nationalistic epic in a Miltonic cast, Dutt's *Ramayana* being representative of this genre. Some introduced Bacon and Hume to Indian students or translated Shakespeare.[21]

Sudipto Chatterjee has explained this curious combination in the following way:

> The Bengali Renaissance was the outgrowth of the grafting of a foreign culture onto a more-than-willing native culture. For the Bengalis their response to what was imposed by the British was a search for a cultural identity that could, at some level, set them on a par with their European overlords. It is in the wake of this endeavour; to assume/regain a respectful self-identity that, in the 1840s, several theatres [among other institutions] were spawned in the native quarters of Calcutta.[22]

English language and literature (Shakespeare included) were firmly established in India by the last two decades of the nineteenth century, although, as the earlier discussions reveal, their introduction were impositions by the colonial masters for good governance and cultural domination with the main objective of perpetuation of their rule. But it turned out that the English language became a unifying factor in the subsequent nationalist movement and struggle for independence. This was the language through which nationalists from different corners, speaking different languages, could communicate amongst themselves.

In the later part of the nineteenth century many private schools and colleges were opened by Indian philanthropists, which were not run by the Government or Christian missionary organizations. Many such institutions had nationalistic and/or non-Christian bias. Two Hindu reformist organizations, the Rama Krishna Mission and the Arya Samaj, were pioneers in this. The schools and colleges run by these organizations had good standards of education. While ancient Christian scriptures and thought were promoted in those schools and colleges, the study of English language and literature were also encouraged with a pragmatic approach because of the importance of this language in the contemporary world. As expected, in the English curriculum, quasi-Christian religious literature did not find a place whereas Shakespeare was a common item. The proliferation of schools and colleges where English was taught continued well into the twentieth century. By this time purely vernacular schools promoted in the early phase of the British administration, where no English was taught, had almost disappeared (except in primary schools).

The question of continuing English in schools and colleges and in the administration was again seriously debated after India attained independence in 1947. The post-colonial period witnessed rapid expansion in education. The anti-English movement was championed by two otherwise antagonistic groups – the religious revivalists and the backward class (*dalits*). They perceived English education as promoting “un-Indian” cultural values and creating a vested elite class. The Hindi language spoken by the majority of Indians was the natural candidate to fill in the space, if English was removed. But the“angrezi-hatao” (remove English) movement, created suspicion in the minds of many politicians from the non-Hindi speaking states as being a ploy for the domination of the Hindi-speaking people over the non-Hindi speaking population. The Southern state of Tamil Nadu (formerly the Madras Province) – the birthplace of the anti-Aryan Dravidian movement, spearheaded the leadership in opposing the anti-English movement. Many top leaders of India’s independence movement like Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr BR Ambedkar (the Champion of *dalit* causes) were the products of English liberal education. Ultimately the pragmatic view of retaining English while promoting Indian languages prevailed.

Today the minority population has a right to run its own schools under the Indian Constitution. Taking advantage of this, many Christian organizations have opened their own schools where the medium of instruction is English. Such schools are immensely popular among the urban middle class and the studentship is mainly non-Christian. The teaching is also predominantly secular. In fact the spread of English language in the post-independence era is phenomenal. India ranks third, next to the USA and the UK, in the publication of English books. English has come to stay in India permanently, in a state of

stable equilibrium, despite its foreign origin. But its status is ambiguous. It is not the "first language" but is certainly not the "second language," as the terms are commonly understood.

English is a compulsory paper of study in high schools beyond class VII (secondary and higher secondary levels) in almost all the states. At the higher levels of education (in colleges and universities) English is invariably the medium of instruction, particularly for science, engineering, medicine, law and management studies in most of the institutions. However, there is an option available for imparting education and answering the examinations in Hindi or in the regional language (the main language of a state).

The English departments in most of the universities are usually large. The old classical English literature, which was zealously promoted by Christian missionaries and colonial rulers in the nineteenth century, no longer finds prominence in the syllabi. Instead, American literature and writings of Indian authors have been included. But Shakespeare holds a special place in the Indian intellectual and literary circles. His writings are considered secular, universal and eternal. In almost all the universities, at least one play of Shakespeare is taught at the Graduate (English Honours/ Major) and Post-Graduate (Masters) levels. *Hamlet* happens to be one of the most popular plays taught.

The English language (along with it, Shakespeare) has been to a very large extent "indigenised" in post-colonial India. It is neither considered by the majority of educated Indians as an imposition of the "ruling class" nor is it felt necessary to cultivate the language to attain "higher cultural identity" as was felt during the Bengal Renaissance.

"Indian English" has found greater acceptance in the world. Many Indian writings on Indian themes in English have received international awards, e.g. Vikram Seth, (*A Suitable Boy*), Salman Rushdie (*Midnight's Children*) and Arundhati Roy (*God of Small Things*). V.S. Naipaul, the Nobel Laureate of 2002, is an ethnic Indian from Trinidad and has written many books on India.

In both colonial and post-colonial India, English studies have been given much importance in academia as a hallmark of progress and civilization, albeit for different reasons. The reception of Shakespeare in post-colonial India can be perceived from the following remarks of the noted critic, C.D. Narasimhaiah, during the Commemoration of the fourth centenary of Shakespeare's birth, in 1964:

> to us educated Indians, the coming of the British… meant among other things, the coming of Shakespeare, of noble speech and brave deeds and so Shakespeare must have a special significance for us in India. Until recently, for hundred and fifty years or so [since 1835], we have learnt English through Shakespeare, and thanks to him the learning has been so pleasant and profitable. Indeed to most of us, English educated Indians, Shakespeare's characters, the situations in his plays, and those memorable lines of his have become almost as intimate a part of our lives as those of the best of our own writers. Shakespeare, more than the English monarch, seems to be the true and vital link between India and England.[23]

Narasimhaiah's vision of colonial history that the loss of Britain's political hold over India would be compensated by the everlasting presence of Shakespeare has proven to be true. According to him, Shakespeare has been instrumental in creating a natural bond between the British and the Indians in a way that occludes colonial history. It may be noted here that a society named *The Shakespeare Society of India* located at Delhi University, has been created by Indian Shakespearean scholars. The society holds periodic discussions, workshops and seminars on Shakespeare, often supported by the British Council. It also edits a journal entitled *The Journal of Hamlet Studies*. The

remarks of Narasimhaiah appear to hold true only for the elite minorities. But subsequent discussions in this thesis will show that Shakespeare has been widely adapted/ translated into various Indian languages and in performances through successful negotiations and appropriations without any emotional attachment to England or to the English language. In this sense the popularity of Shakespeare also remains high with the majority of non-English speaking Indians.

Thus, Shakespeare continues to exist in Indian society and cultural life in two distinct hierarchical levels: the Shakespeare in the English language and the Shakespeare in its Indian versions. The first Shakespeare exists exclusively for the English educated elite and the other Shakespeare that exists in the form of translations and adaptations though often resisted and criticised, has penetrated into the different strata of Indian society and eventually encompassed a much wider circle.

The forthcoming chapter discusses the reception of Shakespeare in the theatrical and cinematic performances including those in different Indian languages.

3 THE RECEPTION OF SHAKESPEARE IN INDIA: *SHAKESPEARE IN INDIAN LANGUAGES AND IN PERFORMANCES*

While Shakespeare has slowly diffused into various regions in India, the mainstay of his activity has been limited to a few centres like Bengal, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, especially in the colonial period. While concentrating primarily on the theatres of these regions, I include other theatres like Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, Malyalam and Mizo that have also significantly borne the Shakespearean impact.

3.1 Shakespeare in Bengali

During the late eighteenth century when the introduction of English literature in India was a topic of intense debate, theatre going was a popular pastime among the Bengalis. *Jatra*, the folk theatre, was popular in Bengali culture before the British came to Bengal. But modern theatres were the introduction of the latter in the city life of Calcutta (presently called Kolkota), which was the main centre of the East India Company's activities. The upper class Bengalis, who came in social contact with the British, gradually developed a liking for the theatre. The introduction of English literary studies tacitly paved the way for Shakespeare, who occupied the most revered position in English drama. In the words of Sushil Mukherjee:

> When the English came to Calcutta they brought with them the plays of Shakespeare. Early in the nineteenth century Shakespeare was a subject of study in the Hindu College [in Calcutta]. Much before that Shakespeare's plays had begun to be staged in the theatres that local Englishmen had set up in the city for their entertainment and relaxation. The names of David Garrick, the great eighteenth-century Shakespearean actor, and Garrick's Drury Lane theatre… were familiar

in Calcutta among the readers of Shakespeare and the lovers of the theatre.[1]

The building of the *Calcutta Theatre* in 1775 set off a trend of regular performances of English plays. One of the first plays to be performed was *Hamlet* followed by *Richard III*, Richard Sheridan Brinsley's *The School for Scandal* and lesser known plays like George Farquhar's *The Beaux Stratagem*, and William Wycherley's *She Would and She Would Not*.[2] It is believed that special instructions had been sent by David Garrick regarding the construction of the *Calcutta Theatre*. The theatrical arrangements and architecture of the playhouse naturally followed the pattern of the theatres of the mother country, like *Covent Garden*, *Drury Lane*, etc. The *Chowringhee Theatre*, which was opened in 1813, was noted for its performances of Shakespearean plays, some of which were *Henry IV*, *Richard III*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Unfortunately, a fire gutted the theatre in the year 1839, when it was at its height of celebrity. Another theatre called the *Sans Souci* was inaugurated in the same year, long remembered for its Shakespearean productions, particularly for the *Merchant of Venice* in 1843. But undoubtedly, the most memorable performance was that of Baishnav Charan Adhya as Othello opposite Mrs Anderson as Desdemona in August 1848: "a Bengali youth in an English theatre catering to an [largely] English audience in… the nineteenth century, is certainly a memorable event in the history of Calcutta's theatres."[3]

The novel phenomenon of the appearance of an Indian in an exclusively English playhouse created quite a stir in the local community, which is evident in one letter to the *Calcutta Star* where Adhya is sneered at as "a real unpainted nigger Othello."[4] However, the theatre, which was barred to the natives till then, gradually opened its doors to aristocratic Indians, some of whom were associated with the later productions. That

theatrical activity in the Calcutta area, prominently centred on Shakespeare, is not surprising. It was merely a reflection of Shakespeare's popularity in England between the late eighteenth and the end of the nineteenth century.

Shakespeare's characters and plots had a profound influence on the artists and writers of the Victorian period. This mimicry of Shakespearean works in colonial Calcutta also aimed at the "civilizing mission" of the British rulers. Visiting troupes from overseas like the Bandmann's Company staged *Hamlet, Macbeth* and *Richard III* in 1882. Later, in 1909, another troupe with well-known actors like Matherson Lang and Charles Vane performed in Calcutta.[5] By the mid-Victorian period, the Bengali elite and middle class had been fairly exposed to English theatrical conventions and ideas, and particularly to Shakespeare.

Meanwhile, the Bengali elite had been seeking a cultural identity that would elevate their status in the eyes of their colonial masters. An exposure to English theatres and prominent literary giants like Shakespeare was a sure means of gaining access to the rulers and acquiring the status of being cultured and refined natives. Taking this into account, it is not surprising that Shakespeare's works held a considerably revered position in the colonial society. Singh testifies to this interest in the following words:

> While the English playhouses by their production of English, especially Shakespeare's plays created an appetite for theatrical performances, the foundation of the *Hindu College* in 1816, and the teaching of Shakespeare by eminent teachers like Richardson [who was also a founder of the Chowringhee Theatre] created in the minds of students – the intelligentsia of modern Bengal – a literary taste for drama as such, and taught them, not only how to appreciate Shakespeare criticism, but also to recite and act scenes from his plays. This fashion spread to every academic institution. In 1837 Bengali students staged scenes from *The Merchant of Venice* in the Governor's house; in 1852 and 1853, the students of the *Metropolitan Academy* and *David Hare Academy* staged Shakespeare's plays, while the old and new students of the Oriental Academy staged… Shakespeare's *Othello* in 1853, *The Merchant of Venice* in 1854, and *Henry IV* in 1855. Shakespeare's dramas became an indispensable part of English education and a popular item in all cultural

> productions. The Bengali theatre, which made its mark in the later decades, was the natural outcome of this new-found passion.[6]

Though somewhat amateurish, these performances were generally appreciated and Shakespearean plays continued being performed by Indians.

Slightly deviating from the norm of reproducing Shakespeare in its original form, a few Bengali translations were inclined towards Indianization to suit the native taste. The first Bengali adaptation of Shakespeare (*The Merchant of Venice*) by Haran Chandra Ghose that is a rendering in prose and verse is named *Bhanumati Cittavilas* (1853).[7] Not only are the names of the dramatis personae Indianized but also the story has been considerably changed with additions, deletions and alterations. Retaining only the main plot of highlighting Portia's cleverness in outwitting Shylock, this adaptation draws on Shakespeare's ideas but is given a Bengali garb. The second Bengali translation of *The Merchant of Venice* entitled *Suralata* (1877) is a less Indianized version but it focuses more on the heroine than on the 'merchant.'[8] Another striking example of the exercise towards Indianization is *Bhranti Vilas*, a translation of *The Comedy of Errors* (1869) by Isvar Chandra Vidyasagar. "He took every care in changing the title of the play, names of persons and places, eliminated all traces of foreignness, substituted all references to Western customs and social behaviour by appropriate cultural equivalents. 'The capon burns; the pig falls from the spit' (I ii: 44), for example, has been eliminated, being offensive to both Hindu and Muslim sensibility, 'Meat is cold' has been replaced by a non-descript vegetarian menu, *ahar samagri* (food), as a literal translation could have given wrong signals"[9] Another bold attempt was made by Haran Chandra Rakshit who summarised all of Shakespeare's plays into Bengali prose in twelve volumes (1896-1903) in the form of a novel.[10] This strategy towards indigenization however failed to catch

much interest from the upper class Bengali theatre goers, who in their anxiety to emulate their colonial masters, were not yet ready for such interculturalisation.

However, there was a parallel development or a "Renaissance" of the Bengali theatre caused by contact with vigorous theatrical activity among the English. Shakespeare's plays have to a large extent influenced contemporary Indian theatre, which is supposed to have originated in Bengal in the mid-nineteenth century. As there had been no direct evolution of ancient classical Sanskrit drama, Indian theatre was in need of fresh impetus. Centuries ago ancient classical Sanskrit theatre had gradually declined mainly due to successive foreign invasions. The signs of decay are evident as early as the ninth century and it is generally believed that the tenth century marks the end of Sanskrit drama as a creative force in Indian theatre. So the practice of performing Sanskrit plays was doomed to disappear over a period of centuries in all but a few isolated pockets around the country, where it remained in a state of stagnation. Exposure to Shakespeare and to other Western classical dramatists along with new stage techniques provided Indian theatre the impetus it required. Sudipto Chatterjee remarks:

> Concentration of wealth in the hands of the *babus* [*the bourgeoisie*] and the rise of a Western-style educated middle class [Macaulay's subjects] provided the right moment of pollination for the budding of a Bengali theatre… Close contact with the British inspired both classes to create their own theatre in the European mould. With the coming of economic, political, and social stability [for these classes] – with a mean being struck between traditional Bengali culture and the … British cultural imports – a system of patronage was born that was to keep Bengali theatre alive for sometime.[11]

Shakespearean drama brought fresh impetus for further growth of Bengali drama. Tagore clearly supported this interest; "Shakespeare's plays have always been our ideal of drama. Their complexity due to multiple branches of plot… clash and conflict have attracted our mind from the very beginning."[12]

It was Shakespeare who gave the great lead in introducing the tragic form to the Bengali stage. It would, however, be incorrect to say that Sanskrit drama entirely excluded tragedy. What it really excluded was the visual representation of death, considered to be an undignified spectacle inimical to aesthetic pleasure. Tragedy or tragic pathos did occur but only at the beginning or the middle of the play but never at the end. It is the underlying optimism in the Hindu philosophy of which Sanskrit drama was a product that did not allow pathos to dominate its total impact. So there was no question of a tragic dénouement. The first tragedy to be acted in Bengal (even India) was Dinabandhu Mitra's *Nila Darpana* (1860), which deals with the merciless exploitation of the indigo planters in India.[13] It was this play with which the first public stage of Bengal, the National Theatre, opened in December 1872. The story depicts the suffering of a native family and ultimately the death of each family member caused by the greed and tyranny of the European planters. The play follows the five-act Shakespearean technique, the crisis being reached in the middle of the third act. This five-act technique became immensely popular in the Bengali stage replacing the ancient mode of seven or ten acts. Dramatists heavily borrowed certain Shakespearean passages and ideas. To cite a few illustrations; the play *Sahajahan* (1910) by Dvijendralal Ray reflects strong reminicences from *King Lear*. The story is based on the life of the Moghul Emperor Sahajahan whose son Aurangzeb overthrows the three brothers, usurps the throne and imprisons the aged father. "The theme is altogether different from that of *King Lear*, but the spirit of the tragedy, the mode of treatment, and the occasional turns of speech and the expression of sentiments certainly recall the great English tragedy."[14] On hearing of the vile deeds of his son, the Emperor utters in a state of frenzy "Oh, let me not be mad! O God, I shall go

mad!"Again he raves like Lear in the famous storm scene of *King Lear*: "Oh Earthquake, arise with a terrible noise Tear the bosom of this earth into a thousand pieces…."[15] There are several other lines in the play distinctly resembling passages in *King Lear*. The Fool or *Dildar* at the court of the Emperor is a partial echo of Lear's Fool. Also there are striking resemblances with other Shakespearean plays. "The courtiers behave in the manner of the fickle crowd or the giddy multitude of *Julius Caesar* or *Coriolanus*."[16] Like Brutus, Jahanara (the Emperor's daughter) pleads for her father. She speaks many home truths; and the courtiers are converted (in favour of the Emperor). However she is no match for Aurangeb's wit who in the manner of Antony sways the crowd in his favour with a powerful torrent of words. Again there are echoes of certain passages of *The Merchant of Venice* and the gravediggers' scene of *Hamlet* in Ray's second masterpice entitled *Candragupta* (1911).[17]

Several playwrights began following Shakespeare's practice of mixing comic elements in tragic plays. The Shakespearean wit-combat has inflenced Bengali dramatists who frequently pun on vernacular words to entertain the audience. Budding playwrights and critics were drawn to his concept of tragedy, his tragi-comic effects and multi-faceted characters.

The Bengali adaptations of Shakespeare of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were clearly distinctive in terms of their cultural synthesis:

> Popularly known as *company nataks* (or company productions), these Bengali adaptations reproduced Shakespeare's plays in the context of the pictorial realism of Victorian theater (touched up by nineteenth-century French melodramas) quite removed from the stylised conventions of their Elizabethan origins.[18]

In 1893, a Bengali version of Macbeth was produced by prominent stage figure Girish Chandra Ghosh at the *Minerva Theatre* in Calcutta.[19] Though the setting was European, the performance was quite unique in character. Ghosh added five songs to his version, omitted most of the allusions and avoided place names. But he tried to retain the original dialogues to recreate the Elizabethan world on the Bengali stage. A contemporary issue of *The Englishman* declared: "A Bengali Thane of Cawdor is a living suggestion of incongruity, but the reality is an astonishing reproduction."[20] This adaptation considered to be a masterpiece in poetic translation, however flopped on the stage. On June 21, 1897, *Hariraja*, a popular adaptation of *Hamlet* was produced by Nagendra Chaudhry in the *Classic Theatre*.[21] Directed by Amarendra Dutta this was a somewhat carefree adaptation and did not have much of *Hamlet* in it. Not considered to be a model of artistic ingenuity, this play however, was a runaway success and held the stage for years. What indeed appears strange is the roaring success of this much inferior version of Shakespeare compared to the lukewarm response of its earlier counterpart, a refined version created painstakingly and meticulously. One is inclined to agree with Ghosh that the Bengali audience's preoccupation with lurid fare interfered in the appreciation of a higher work of art.[22]

Other adaptations of Shakespeare's plays followed. On December 4, 1915, *Saudagar*, an adaptation of the *The Merchant of Venice*, was staged by Bhupendra Bandopadhya; and on March 18, 1919, *Othello*, translated by Devendranath Basu was also performed at the *Star Theatre*.[23]

With an increased number of Bengali productions, the number of Shakespearean adaptations gradually started dwindling from the Calcutta stage between the second and

the fourth decades of the twentieth century. However, the playwright's profound influence on the Bengali theatre, scholars of literature and theatre people is evident from the fact that Shakespeare has been translated into Bengali far more than any other foreign author.

Shakespearean adaptations in the Bengali theatre were distinctive in character in postcolonial India compared to their earlier versions in the colonial period. Jyotsna Singh explains this gradual transition of indigenous drama quite explicitly:

> Prior to independence, the discourse about Shakespeare was framed within a colonial trope of civilisation, the assumptions of which were eagerly accepted by the native elites. In contrast, postcolonial Shakespeare theater, in most instances, self-consciously attempted to acquire an indigenous identity, free from the British criteria of cultural value. One aspect of these hybrid productions of Shakespeare meant that they undermined the colonial binaries of tradition and modernity. As Indian translators re-cast canonical Western plays within indigenous dramaturgical traditions [melodrama, songs and dances, romantic sentimentalism, depiction of religious fervour, sudden shifting of scenes between earth and heaven, lofty ideals of heroism, free use of space and time dimensions etc.] while often commenting on contemporary postcolonial social realities, they forced their audiences to re-examine their historical bearings in the past, present, and future – as well as among colonial and native cultural forms and their differing social functions.
>
> The new, postcolonial drama movement of the mid-1940s had a two-fold purpose: of introducing the plays of famous dramatists, ancient and modern, to Bengal, and of making drama more responsive to the social and political realities of the Indian masses. And Shakespeare figured prominently in this hybrid endeavor of applying contemporary concerns to Western canonical texts.[24]

Utpal Dutt, prominent actor, director and revolutionary took an active role in bringing about such a revival of Shakespeare. After his theatrical training in 1947, with Geoffrey Kendal's company, *Shakespeareana*, he began his own *Little Theatre Group* in Calcutta to produce Shakespeare's plays in English. Dutt aimed at bringing Shakespeare to the masses and producing a new political theatre. According to him, the classics were not the prerogative of an elite. They would cease to exist unless they were brought to the people.[25]

He tried to incorporate Shakespeare into *Jatra*, the vigorous folk theatre of Bengal. His Bengali translation of *Macbeth*, which toured several villages, created quite a sensation. Bringing Shakespeare to the masses meant an inevitable rejection of the Victorian proscenium stage and working with native theatrical traditions. According to several critics, Dutt's rural production of *Macbeth* had closer affinity with the Elizabethan theatre than many recent Western revivals. In fact, it has been commented that his earlier performances of Shakespeare in rural India were far more successful in reviving a sense of the original Elizabethan popular drama than his later proscenium production [*Macbeth*] in Calcutta, where the play becomes another nineteenth century melodrama.[26] Such intercultural experiments in reproducing Shakespeare have been continuing in private companies like the *Little Theatre Group* and in the *National School of Drama* in New Delhi.

3.2 Shakespeare in Marathi

Apart from Bengal, the former Province of Bombay (presently the Maharashtra and the Gujarat State of India and the Sindh Province of Pakistan) was another centre of intense theatrical activity related to Shakespeare. Shakespeare came to Bombay in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Marathi intelligentsia began focussing on English literature with the same underlying motive like the Bengalis. In their adaptations, Marathi dramatists expressed a spirit of revolt against British rule and simultaneously tried to highlight contemporary social problems. They mainly tried to portray the difference between contemporary Indian society that was by and large traditional compared to the more liberal West. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, one of the renowned social reformers and

distinguised playwright writes that “one of the objectives of reading plays of different cultures is to realize the limitations of one’s own society.”[27] V.J. Kirtane first triggered off this cultural movement with his *Thorale Madhavrao Peshwe* in 1861, the first historical tragedy in Marathi.[28] This was followed by active nationalist and revolutionary, Nanasaheb Peshwa’s translation of *Hamlet* into Marathi in 1862.[29] While social reform was not the primary aim of Shakespearean translations, it is evident that the new wave of changing social norms in terms of caste hierarchy and gender relations drew some of its fortifications from Shakespeare. Unfortunately there are not enough sources to indicate the storylines of these plays that might have made interesting discussion. The latter part of the century witnessed a splurge of Shakespearean translations and adaptations. Several teaching institutions also played a major role in spreading this vogue. The University of Bombay was founded in 1857. Professors of Bombay and Pune universities became pre-occupied in translating Shakespearean texts.

Mahadev Govindshastri Kolhatkar first adapted *Othello* in 1867.[30] Well-known Marathi dramatist Govind Ballal Devlal first staged this version of Kolhatkar where he himself played the title role. This was followed by a spate of translations/ adaptations like *The Tempest* (1874), *King Lear* (1881), *Romeo and Juliet* (1882), *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (1882), *The Winter’s Tale* (1882) and many others.[31] *Romeo and Juliet* proved to be immensely successful on the Marathi stage. Among other things, the success of this play lies in the fact that “despite its tragic ending, it provided much closer approximation to the Indian experience of love and passion, social authority and individual frustration within the rigidities of caste and marriage rules. The twin lovers became a part of the Indian inventory of love legends that include Radha and Krishna, Laila and Majnu, Shirin

and Farhad, Heer and Ranjha, Sohini and Mahiwal and Devdas and Parvati."[32] The restructuring of the text is another criterion for success. D.A. Keshkar's translation of *Romeo and Juliet* entitled *Tara-Vilasa* (1908) closely followed the lines of the original story and failed to receive much applause but another adapation, *Mohan-Tara* by K.R. Chapkhane drew in the crowds. Here Rosalini, who is a trivial character in Shakespeare's play assumes a major role and is forced to marry Tybalt but retains her affection for Romeo. Her secret infatuation for Romeo serves as an interesting subplot in this version.

However the success of *Hamlet* on the Marathi stage reached scintillating heights, unparalleled by any other Shakespearean play. The most memorable adaptation of this period was that of *Hamlet* (Agarkar's *Vikara Vilasit* in 1883) where the legendary actor Ganpatrao Joshi struck waves amongst the audience with his vivid acting. While its success on stage is mainly attributed to this renowned actor, the secret of its popularity as a translation and as a play lies in the strategies adopted by Agarkar.[33] The play is Indianized to a large extent. All the proper names (of the characters and the places) have been replaced by Sanskrit words that their European identity is completely erased. Allusions to European myths and legends have been cleverly replaced by Indian equivalents. For example, the death of Priam within the play scene is replaced by a familiar and touching episode (the Ashwathama- Dron episode) of the epic *Mahabharata*. In Act I scene ii, Shaleya (Polonius) pours forth didactic Sanskrit[iv] verses in profusion.

Yet the translation as a whole does not deviate from the original in its narrative sequence and arrangement of materials.

[iv] It is interesting to note that Sanskrit figures prominently in *Vikara Vilasit* often replacing Marathi. Only a reading of this Marathi version of *Hamlet* would explain the status of Sanskrit in the play that is otherwise left unexplained in the available sources in English.

The famous passages like "to be or not to be….." (III i: 58- 92) and "Frailty, thy name is woman…." (I ii: 146-159) have been directly translated retaining their original flavour and implications. Certain lines with suggestions of obscenity are either eliminated or neatly twisted to stay within the lines of Indian stage decorum but without appearing meaningless. One such instance is the following dialogue between Hamlet and Ophelia in Act III, ii 101-107:

> Hamlet. Lady, shall I lie in your lap?
> Ophelia. No, my lord.
> Hamlet. I mean, my head upon your lap?
> Ophelia. Ay, my lord.
> Hamlet. Do you think I meant country matters?
> Ophelia. I think nothing, my lord.
> Hamlet. That's a fair thought to lie between maids' legs.

Suggesting the same meaning as the original Agarkar rewrites these lines in a different manner:

> H.Will you allow me to sit beside you?
> O.What is this, Maharaj (King / Prince)?
> H. Don't fear. I am not going to do anything inappropriate.
> Shall I keep my head on your feet?

Agarkar removed the most offensive line. "That's a fair thought to lie between maiden's legs."

A second illustration of a different kind can be cited here. Agarkar totally changes the following passage to suit the Indian cultural milieu while creating the same effect as the original:

> Hamlet. Thrift, thrift, Horatio! The funeral baked meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables
> Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
> Ere I had ever seen that day, Horatio!
>
> (I ii: 179-182)

In his version he writes, "Only to reduce the expenditure. [An exchange between] the Brahmin (priest) for the last rite ceremony and the Brahmin for the wedding. Has he

done intermarriage [intercaste/religion]?"

Finally, special embellishments to the richness of this translation are Mallika's (Ophelia) sad but sweet songs beautifully rendered in mellifluous Marathi lyrics.

Among the innumerable translations, Nana Joag's three-act adaptation of *Hamlet* in 1957 deserves special mention. Damu Kenkare who also played the lead role directed it. Here all the characters including Hamlet have been Indianized, yet the book is entitled *Hamlet*:

> The admirable part of this exercise was that Joag had created a Marathi parallel of the Bard's blank verse. No pains were spared in an authentic visual and aural impact of the Court of Elsinore, the costumes and of the rhythmic spoken verse.[34]

A play which posed problems was *Othello*. The first revival of *Zunzarrao* (the first acting edition of Kolhatkar's version of *Othello*) in 1950 did not appear to be too successful. A decade later, V.V. Shirwadkar's rendering of *Othello* also flopped. Another Shakespearean adaptation that evaded success is *Macbeth*. Shirwadkar wrote an adaptation in 1954 called *Rajmukut*; well-known British director, Herbert Marshall, was commissioned to direct it and seasoned thespians like Nanasaheb Phatak and Durgabai Khote were given the lead roles:

> On the stage of the Sangh's open-air theatre Marshall created the mock-up of an Elizabethan theatre. There was a big apron stage, which, unfortunately, jutted out beyond the essential microphones. In their soliloquies neither Phatak nor Durgabai could be heard! And what does one make of the powerful banquet scene? Does one ask the guests to sit on wooden planks on the floor and serve them laddoos [Indian sweets]? The entire frustration of this trans-cultural effort came tumbling down on the heads of director and actors. The debate has since then been going on whether Shakespeare should be adapted or translated… In the latter case Macbeth's guests will at least eat at the dining table – more stageworthy, more dignified! [35]

In later years, a few other directors grappled with this adaptation but failed miserably. There have been other sporadic attempts to present Shakespeare as S.N. Oak's *Gadya Apula Gaon Bara (The Comedy of Errors)*, Vidyadhar Gokhle's *Madanachi Manjiri (Twelfth Night)*, Dilip Jagtap's *Chetukw (The Tempest)*, Subhash Sonawane's *Shakespearearche Natak (A Midsummer's Night Dream)* and Dilip Pardeshi's *Nishpaap (Othello)* which fared relatively better.

One conspicuous feature of Marathi adaptations of Shakespeare is that tragedies were often turned into comedies, which, according to Moharir was because the Sanskrit dramatic tradition generally lacked the 'tragedy form.'[36] For example, the Marathi adaptation of *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet* ended in happy notes. Moharir's interpretation appears to be rather sweeping and general. Unlike Western dramas which are invariably classified as comedies and tragedies, Sanskrit dramas have several classifications based on *rasas*, which will be discussed in detail in subsequent chapters.

Like the Bengali stage, the subtle influence of Shakespeare is evident on the Marathi stage. Eminent dramatist K.P. Khadilkar has been profoundly influenced by the Shakespearean tragedies of *Hamlet*, *Othello* and *Macbeth*. In the historical tragedy *Savai Madhavaraowancha Mrityu* (1896), he has presented characters in the nature of Hamlet and Iago. Although the theme is totally different and he doesn't imitate scenes or passages from the originals, he has subtly drawn on certain ideas. Certain devices and expressions are remniscent of Shakespeare. There is a selfish priest in the play who resembles Iago. The female character Yasoda reflects the innocence and charm of Ophelia. Her husband Madhavarao for some inexplicable cause gets fits of lunacy and when she tries to console him he exclaims that the touch of her hand is like the stings of

thousands of scorpions on one spot. This expression recalls Macbeth’s “O, full of scorpions is my mind, dear wife!”[37] Another historical play of Khadilkar entitled *Bhaubandki* (1904) carries strong influences of *Macbeth*.The female lead Anandibhai closely resembles Lady Macbeth and instigates her husband to murder his nephew for the sake of gaining power and honour. The royal priest Ramasastri resembles Macduff and fights for the cause of truth and justice. Having committed the deed, Anandibhai’s husband, Raghoba is not easily reconciled and remains haunted by the ghost of his murdered nephew.[38] In yet another play *Premadhvaja* (1924) Khadilkar has borrowed the Shakespearean device of a disguise on the stage, which is revealed only at the end as in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Merchant of Venice*.[39] Another Marathi tragedy that bears a distinct impress of Shakespeare is Ram Ganesh Gadkari’s *Ekaja Pyala* (*Only a Glass of Wine*, 1919), which draws the structure, characters and motivation from *Othello* but where jealousy is replaced by the evil of drink.[40]

Like the Bengali stage modern Marathi theatre has drawn the five-act Shakespearean technique and the ancient practice of seven or ten acts has fallen into disuse. The ancient Indian mode of a prologue has vanished, and many plays start without any formality or ceremony and proceed straight to the plot. Again unlike traditional drama, many short explanatory scenes are introduced in the style of Shakespeare. Ironically Shakespeare through his Chronicle plays, especially *Henry V*, played a significant role in instilling a public spirit of nationalism in colonial India:

> Shakespeare pointed the way towards the glorification of great national heroes and of the motherland. The soil being thus admirably prepared by the English example, the patriotic beginning of the century assumed an attractive form on the stage. Great nation-builders like Pratap and Shivaji [Marathi heroes] were treated with even greater reverence and sentimental pride than Henry V had been by Shakespeare.[41]

According to the bibliography of Shakespearean dramas in Indian languages published by the *Theatre and Television Associates* in 1989, there have been seventy three and eighty one translations/ adaptations of Shakespeare in Bengali and Marathi languages respectively till that date. There have been seven adaptations of *Hamlet* in Marathi and nine adaptations of the same play in Bengali.[42] It is worth noting that the popularity of *Hamlet* on the Marathi stage surpassed that of any other Shakespearean play. On reviewing the various stage versions of this tragedy, Yajnik remarks, “It may be recorded that no Shakespearean play, most faithfully rendered, has evoked such unbounded enthusiasm and admiration in India as the Marathi *Hamlet*.”[43]

3.3 Shakespeare in the Parsi Theatre

Another prominent theatre that burgeoned in India during the mid-nineteenth century was the Parsi theatre. The Parsis are Zoroastrian émigrés from Persia who have been long settled in Western India but still remain culturally distinct as a community never having blended with the mainstream of Indian culture. The Parsi theatre flourished mainly in the former Bombay province and owes much to Shakespeare. This enterprising community was quick to discover the commercial potentialities of Shakespeare and of Western theatrical techniques. “Their productions were acclaimed by the audience all over India mainly for their flamboyant manner of acting, grandiloquent speeches, loud and titillating music, gorgeous backdrops, dazzling costumes and illusion-creating stage props.”[44] The original company of Pestonji Framji – a Parsi, started in 1868. Many other Parsi-Urdu theatrical companies also sprang up in other cities. The Shakespeare plays performed by these companies included *The Merchant of Venice* (*Dilfarosh*), *The*

Comedy of Errors (*Bhoolbhulayya*), *The Winter's Tale* (*Muradshoak*), *Cymbeline* (*Zulm Naza*), *Measure for Measure* (*Husnaara*), *Romeo and Juliet (Bazme Phani*), *Hamlet* (*Khoon-e-Nahak*), *Othello* (*Shahid-e-Wafa*), *King Lear* (*Har Jeet*) and *Anthony and Cleopatra* (*Kali Nagin*).[45] Of these, the Urdu *Hamlet* entitled *Khoon-e-Nahak* (1900) by Ahsan Lucknawi enjoyed tremendous popularity. Although referred to as a translation, it is actually a free adaptation. The events and incidents are curiously jumbled and altered. There is hardly any close verbal resemblance, songs appear needlessly destroying the continuity, beautiful scenes are distorted and comic relief is replaced by vulgar farce. Most of the soliloquies are absent and Hamlet does not delay due to any philosophical reasoning but simply because of a vague suspicion about the authenticity of the Ghost. His relations with Gertrude and Ophelia are not delicately handled and the Prince merely becomes a melodramatic hero. Horatio has no strong role as Hamlet's friend. Fortinbras and the gravediggers do not figure at all. Ophelia commits suicide by jumping into the sea from a bridge. Additional underplots are attached to the main plot where Marcellus is in love with Rahana, a friend of Ophelia who is also wooed by Anwar, Horatio's brother. Mansur, son to Cornelius is attracted to Ophelia. The love intrigue takes a sharp turn when Hamlet kills his rival Mansur who was trying to force himself on the unwilling Ophelia. The play within the play is not called the *Mousetrap* but the *Unjust Murder* where the Queen instigates the murder. On watching the play, Claudius loses his composure and wants to run away but is prevented by Hamlet. Laertes challenges Hamlet for a duel where they fight and wound each other. The Queen in panic runs for help and asks for a drink for her wounded son. Cornelius who is the father of Mansur (killed by Hamlet) passes her a poisoned chalice in order to avenge his son's death. When Hamlet

refuses to drink the Queen drinks the cup of poisoned syrup and dies. Cornelius runs away and Laertes makes his confession. Hamlet finally shoots his uncle before dying. So while the main line of the original story is preserved, the atmosphere is lost. Yajnik calls this intermeshing an utter ruin of the great tragedy.[46] However the phenomenal success of this stage version can be attributed to a sensational tale backed up by refined theatrical techniques, spectacular stage effects and titillating music.

One of the most prominent figures of the Parsi theatre was Agha Hashr Kashmiri (1879-1935) remembered for his innovative power and dramatic ingenuity. The title of *Shakespeare-e- Hind* or the 'Indian Shakespeare' was bestowed upon him. His major plays *Safed Khun* (*King Lear*), *Said-e-Hawas* (*King John*) and *Khawab-e-Hasti* (*Macbeth*) were successful on stage.[47] All his productions of Shakespeare plays carried both musical and comic interludes that struck a clever balance between traditional music-dominated Indian drama and the modern theatre that emerged under European influence. This technique introduced by him appealed to the Indian audience and continued to be imitated by other dramatists for a long time.

In Urdu, Shakespeare has been the most translated foreign author.[48] There have been 46 renderings of Urdu plays based on Shakespeare out of which 7 are on *Hamlet*.[49] Most of these translations were mediocre and Urdu was the predominant language. They were mainly farcical representations aiming at the box office, without much regard for literary artistry. Though they failed to satisfy the elite audience, their influence on later Hindi playwrights has been profound.

The Parsi dramatists were also active in producing Gujarati adaptations of Shakespeare. Dinshaw Talyarkhan first translated *The Taming of the Shrew* and staged it

in 1852.[50] This Gujarati version was the first Shakespearean play to be staged in India in an Indian language and was entitled *Nathari Firangiz Thekani Avi* (A Bad Foreign Woman Brought to Sense). The translator apparently faced difficulty in translating the word ‘shrew’and contextualising it within contemporary Indian social situation:

> Kate goes against the Indian woman stereotype, almost revolutionary in her refusal to marry—this is something inconceivable in Indian society, marriage being the ultimate *dharma* [duty] of a woman. But at the same time she presents a type of woman that the male audience delights in watching being tamed. The use of the title *Nathari Firangiz* is a clever device to appropriate the story that satisfies the Indian male chauvinism without demeaning the Indian womanhood, but underlining the Indian criticism of the European female. It was important for the translator to remind his reader that Kate was not an Indian but a *Firangi*.[51]

No less then twenty Parsi companies had sprung up in Bombay in 1860. Parsi actors, being well versed in English, tended to imitate the technique of the British companies performing in Bombay. Translations of other Shakespearean plays like *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Cymbeline*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, followed in quick succession. One of the major companies, which flourished during the end of the nineteenth century, was *The Victoria*. This company toured several places in Asia as well as in London. Among Gujarati writers, Dayabhai Dhoshalji showed much promise. He founded the *Deshi Natak Samaj* (Society of Indian Drama) in 1890, which took a lead in staging plays roughly patterned after Shakespeare. Well-known among these are *Ashrumati* and *Veenaveli*, which carry distinct traces of *King John*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*.[52] Doshalji translated twenty-five Shakespeare plays, all of which reflected his literary prowess.

One of the best-known adaptations of the times was *Soubhagya Sundari* that was an adaptation of *Othello*, which made huge profits at the box-office. It transformed Shakespeare's tragedy into a three-act tragi-comedy with the usual farcical additions and amorous songs. Othello is a handsome prince who is unaware of his own identity. Desdemona dressed as a boy, escapes with Othello and the couple ultimately find their way to the kingdom of Othello's father. The King, not recognizing his own son appoints him as the commander of the army, removing Iago from the post. Thus the motive for revenge is estsablished. Othello doesn't murder Desdemona in a fit of rage but throws her into the river after half-strangling her. In the last act she is however rescued by Othello's mother and all misunderstandings get cleared up. The final scene is sensational with the dramatic exposure of Iago's guilt, the King's recognition of Othello and the coronation of the hero.[53] Other important translations include *All's Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *As You Like It*, *Macbeth* and *Cymbeline*. There are about thirty-one translations of Shakespeare in the Gujarati language out of which two are of *Hamlet*.[54]

The Shakespearean influence is easily discernible in the indigenous Gujarati theatre as well. M.N. Dwivedi's *Kanta* and Ramanabhai's *Raaino Parvat*, both of which followed Sanskrit dramatic structures (the classic seven-act technique and a prologue), carried strong influences of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*.[55] Well-known Shakespearean quotations like "Frailty, thy name is woman!" or "All the world's a stage…" are strewn in Gujarati plays which have otherwise no link with Shakespeare.

The Marathi adapters' and the Gujarati-Parsi adapters' approach to Shakespeare hinges on two basic differences:

> None of the Marathi writers or artists ever had a chance to go to England; but they were informed by a deep reverence for the Bard's plays. On the other hand, the Gujarati-Parsi entrepreneurs were more interested in borrowing the externals of Shakespeare's plays, including the plots, and presenting fairly garbled versions of the original.[56]

This is one reason why modern day Marathi translators and adapters like Shirwadkar, Nana Joag and Arun Naik have taken serious interest in the authenticity of their translations compared to their Gujarati counterparts. Apart from a staging of an adaptation of *Richard III* in the fifties, the Gujarati theatre doesn't show much promise as far as Shakespeare is concerned. On the other hand, flooded with new experiments and reinterpretations, Shakespeare continues to thrive on the Marathi stage.

The Parsi theatre has been accused of debasing the Bard in its extreme Indianization and thorough commercialisation.

> It was not the poetry of Shakespeare, nor the psychological conflicts that interested the Parsi theatre which was keen to appropriate the story with its emotional turbulence and violence of action. In Parsi theatre versions of Shakespeare, one finds Portia singing passionate songs, Viola and Sebastian escaping in the opening scene of the play (*Twelfth Night*) in a railway train which during a thunder-storm crashes into a sea; Antony continues to live while Cleopatra goes to her violent death; *King Lear* is turned into a comedy and the plots of *Richard III* and *King John* are fused into one single play. In a recent article Mr. K.K. Khullar mentions that in *Khoon-e-Nahaq* (*The Unjustified Murder*) -an adaptation of *Hamlet*…the prince of Denmark is so thoroughly Indianized that his court was converted into a medieval Indian one where Princes performed *Kathak* dance and *begums*[wives] chew betel leaves and nuts.[57]

The contribution of the Parsis, a miniscule minority group, in the Indian theatre (and later cinema) in the province of Bombay during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, needs to be specially recognized. Though they borrowed little from Shakespeare beyond the general outlines of the plot, their theatre companies have ensured the biggest and most widely circulated presence of Shakespeare ever within the Indian theatrical scene. The Parsis established many theatres in Bombay in which plays,

including Shakespearean ones were performed mainly in Gujarati and Urdu (or Hindusthani) and even briefly in English. Many travelling theatres, established by them performed Shakespeare in various cities of British India, even going as far as Rangoon and Singapore. So, in a way the Parsi theatre was not only modern India's first commercial urban theatre but also India's first national theatre. Such travelling theatres were very common in the British colonies all over the world. These theatres often performed Shakespeare in the colonies to "civilize" the "natives" and the "savages" and had tremendous cultural impact in the colonies. The theatre financed by the Parsis embodied colonial negotiation, theatrical transformation and cross-cultural adaptations. According to Loomba the performances of Shakespearean plays on Parsi stages (including the travelling theatres) over the whole colonial period:

> literally transformed both Shakespeare and the idea of public Indian theatre….The stories of Shakespeare's imperial travels are tales of colonial formations, of decolonisation, national culture, post-colonialism and even the new world order.[58]

3.4 Shakespeare in Hindi

While the maximum impact of Shakespeare was felt in the theatre world in Bengal and Bombay (Maharashtra), it was not limited to those two regions. In other areas, Shakespeare arrived only towards the end of the 19^{th} century or early 20^{th} century. Ratnachandra adapted *The Comedy of Errors* as *Bhramajalaka* in Hindi in 1879. The other major translations in Hindi during the nineteenth century were: *The Merchant of Venice* as *Durlabh Badhu Ya* by Harishchandra (1880), *The Merchant of Venice* as *Venice ka Byapari* by Gokulchandra Sharma (1888), *Macbeth* as *Sahasendra Sahas* by M.P. Choudhury (1893), *The Tempest* as *Tuphan* by J.P. Chaturvedi (1897), *As You Like*

It as *Manavaran* by Gopinath (1897), *Othello* as *Othello* by Gadadhar Sinha (1894) and *Romeo and Juliet* as *Premlila* by Gopinath (1898). The translations and adaptations of Shakespeare's play in this language continued well into the twentieth century. About 49 Shakespearean dramas have been rendered in Hindi (till 1989) out of which 7 are of *Hamlet*. Renowned Hindi writer and poet, Harivanshrai Bachhan translated *Hamlet* in 1969, *Macbeth* in 1957 and *King Lear* in 1972. The original names of the plays were retained in these translations. A Hindi stage performance of *Hamlet* written by Amrit Rai was done as late as in 1988.[59] There have been 5 screen versions of Shakespeare's plays in Hindi and Urdu (the two languages are closely similar but different in script) out of which two are of *Hamlet*, two of the *Comedy of Errors* and one of *Romeo and Juliet*. The two films based on *Hamlet* were produced by two well-known film personalities, Shorab Modi (*Khoon ka Khoon*, 1935) and Kishore Sahu (*Hamlet*, 1954). The films are highly rhetorical in style, more akin to Parsi theatrical style:[60]

> The influence of Shakespeare on creative writings in Hindi, is, in fact, rather slight and fitful. There is hardly any writer whose works give evidence of a deep and sustained creative engagement with Shakespeare… Broadly speaking, the tragic vision of Shakespeare, even though it has frequently been the subject of rapturous critical adulation, has not had the kind of creative impact on Hindi literature, drama and film that its comedies and romances have had… Thus it appears that popular Hindi culture, as reflected in the Parsi theatre and the Bombay film industry would endorse Dr Johnson's verdict that Shakespeare's tragedy, 'seems to be skill, his comedy to be instinct.[61]

3.5 Shakespeare in Tamil

The English language entered Madras (recently renamed as Chennai, situated in the southern state of Tamil Nadu) at the same time as in Calcutta and Bombay. Shakespeare's entry into the then Madras Presidency was in the late eighteenth century. After the establishment of Madras University, along with the Universities of Calcutta and

Bombay, the ground for full-fledged translations of Shakespearean plays into Tamil was prepared by the introduction of prose extracts or songs from the plays in the school and college texts in English. This subsequently led to the entry of minor episodes and brief passages from the plays in Tamil textbooks and finally, to their full-scale translations and adaptations in the Tamil language. A strong motive force for this was the desire to make up for the absence of drama, particularly realistic drama, in Tamil literature.[62]And what could have been considered better in those days than introducing Shakespearean dramas? The earliest of such works was in 1893 (*Midsummer Night's Dream* by S. Narayana Swamy Aiyar).[63]

It was however, Pammal Sambanda Mudaliyar (1874-1964), a playwright, translator and actor who mainly brought Shakespeare into the Tamil stage. In fact, he brought respectability for the Tamil theatre through an amateur dramatic society, called the *Suguna Vilasa Sabha*, established in 1891, of which he was a founding member. Mudaliyar adapted and acted in five plays of Shakespeare staged by the Society: *As You Like It, Cymbeline, Hamlet*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Macbeth*.[64] Amongst all the Shakespearean adaptations in Tamil, it was Mudaliyar's version of *Hamlet*, which won accolades and proved to be the most successful on stage. Like Agarkar's Marathi adaptation of *Hamlet* (page 42), this faithful Tamil version closely follows the lines of the original but is cast in an Indian mould. It is primarily meant for Tamil theatregoers. Befitting southern India, Dravidian names chosen with meticulous care have replaced English names. Hence Hamlet is the "spotless sun," Ophelia is the "helpless damsel" and Polonius the "protector." It is curious to note that certain ancient Dravidian practices like the modes of burial closely resemble Danish ones and didn't require much change.

Mudaliyar's portrayal of the hero has earned tremendous applause but his depiction of Ophelia has invited criticism. Critics have been especially caustic about the scene of Ophelia's death that has been transformed into an occasion for amusement by "reproducing all the grotesque realism associated with a class of funerals in the streets of Madras."[65] However setting aside a few glaring defects, it was Mudaliyar's ingenuity and sincerity, which made this play a rollicking success on stage.

Swami Vibhulananda (1892-1947), a missionary of the Ramakrishna Mission in Sri Lanka contributed a great deal towards scholarly study of Shakespeare in Tamil. In a series of articles under the title, *Matanga Choolamani* (*A Gem Amongst the Dramatics*) published from July 1924 onwards in the Tamil journal, *Centamil*, he analysed twelve plays in the light of the eight-fold theory of emotions set out in ancient Tamil treatise, *Meyppatu* which is analogous to the *Rasa* theory of Sanskrit aesthetics.[66] *Meyppatu* (*mey* meaning 'body' and *ppatu* meaning 'the acts based on body') is the term used to refer to those manifestations which appear on the body of an individual as a sign of what goes inside the mind. The Tamil aesthetic theory of emotions has been discussed in the section on poetics in *Tolkappiam* (3th century B.C.) that is a book on phonology, grammar, and poetics. The author of this book Tolkappiyar speaks of eight *meyppatus* or emotions like the Sanskrit aestheticians (to be discussed later). There are slight deviations in this theory, for instance, the emotion of love or *sringara* in Sanskrit poetics is called *uvakai* or happiness in *Tolkappiam* and is more extensive than its Sanskrit counterpart. According to the theory of *Meyppattu* each of the eight bodily manifestations is related to four moods or feelings. These moods or feelings may be causative mechanisms or consequential results. In other words, the major eight manifestations are related to thirty

two different types of moods/feelings. The implications of this theory of *Meyppattu* are yet to be worked out in detail by further research. Evidently this theory has been partly borrowed from the *rasa* theory of Sanskrit dramaturgy that is supposed to have been compiled a century earlier (*Natyasastra*, 4th century B.C.).

Some of the famous names in the world of translations of Shakespeare into Tamil are T.N. Seshachalam, A.C. Chettair, Narayanaswamy Naidu, Pulavar Ekambaranathan, Justice Mahajan, and Aru Somasundaram. However, considering the fact that the entry of the English language into Madras was very early and its use is widespread, the number of plays of Shakespeare in Tamil is surprisingly small. It is about thirty-four till 1989. *The Merchant of Venice* is the most frequently translated play with as many as seven versions followed by *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* (six each). *King Lear* and *Romeo and Juliet* have been translated/ adapted five and four times respectively.[67]

3.6 Shakespeare in Telugu, Malyalam and Kannada

In the remaining three South Indian languages (other than Tamil), viz. Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, translations/ adaptations of Shakespeare were mainly done in the twentieth century. There were about ten renderings of Shakespeare in Telugu but *Hamlet* does not seem to have been attempted by any Telugu writer at least upto 1989.[68] Despite the limited number of translations in Telugu, modern Telugu theatre has derived much from Shakespeare. The true Shakespearean legacy to this theatre lay in the general dramatic form as in Marathi and Bengali rather than specific translations or adaptations.

Modern Kannada literature is considered to be a rich one. The first extant Kannada play, belonging to the seventeenth century was a translation of Sriharsha's

Sanskrit play *Ratnavali*. Traditionally, Sanskrit had considerable influence over Kannada literature. The English language started influencing the latter from the middle of the nineteenth century. The first translation of Shakespeare was *The Comedy of Errors* in 1871. Till about 1920, renderings of Shakespeare in Kannada were usually prose adaptations with some verse or freer appropriations of the original and promising translations started appearing only from 1930 onwards. The reason for this according to Vijaya Guttal is the "caution taken to preserve one's own identity and come to terms with a predominant alien culture. Writers started translating Shakespeare faithfully when our own language and culture had become strong enough to accept Shakespeare on the basis of equality."[69]

Thirty-six Kannada plays of Shakespeare have been written between 1890 and 1978. Out of these five are on *Hamlet* (by Ananda Rao in 1905, Y.M. Shanmukhayya in 1954, Masti Venkata Ayyangar in 1959 and Ramachandra Deva in 1978).[70] Worth mentioning here may be *Raktaksi* (Blood Stained Eye) written by Kuvempur (Dr K.V. Puttappa), the winner of the prestigious Jnanapith Award in 1932. This has run into 10 reprints so far. This work can be considered as an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in a broad sense and is an excellent example of cross-cultural dialogue. Kuvempu has very ably transplanted:

> the British and Christian culture into Indian, Hindu and especially Lingayat, culture by borrowing the historical characters belonging to the royal family of the Bidanur kingdom in the Shimoga district in mid-Karnataka. Likewise, Kuvempu finds parallels with the major events of *Hamlet* in the royal history of Bidanur and their relationship with Hyder Ali of Mysore.[71]

More recent years have witnessed a frequent staging of the bard's well-known tragedies like *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *King Lear*, in order of popularity.

Two adaptations by Ekbal Ahmed have won wide acclaim. *Gombe Macbeth* proclaims his consummate skill in the art of visual effects which are richly imbued with suggestion. Like all his Shakespearean productions, *Gombe Macbeth* is an ingenious amalgamation of the East and the West. One particular scene which amply demonstrates a stunning piece of visualisation of Macbeth's guilt is when he returns after Duncan's murder with a lump of red wool clinging to the end of his dagger.He desperately tries to remove the blood stain but fails to do so. As he stands shocked and exasperated going through a series of emotions Lady Macbeth enters and removes it easily with one clean sweep. This episode is a striking imitation of an art from the popular *Yakshagana* (a south Indian folk theatre form) episode that depicts the severing of Lord Brahma's fifth head by Lord Shiva.[v] The head clings to Shiva's arm and begins to swallow it. As Shiva desperately tries to get rid of the head, the artist who plays the role of Shiva passes through all the nine *rasas* or emotions (to be delineated later) just as Macbeth does in his attempt to wipe off the blood on his dagger.[72]

The *Hamlet* production of 1992 is another masterpiece of Ekbal Ahmed. He sees *Hamlet* as a play on broken hearted relationships. As his *Macbeth* version the *Hamlet* version also boasts of stunning visual effects and is a harmonious blending of the East and the West.[73]

For reasons difficult to trace, drama in Malyalam, the fourth chief language of the south took relatively little from Shakespeare. Out of the eighteen translations of Shakespeare in Malayalam, the most popular one was a free adaptation of *The Midsummer Night's Dream* in 1909, which has been converted into a musical. The four translations of *Hamlet* have not come to the limelight.

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[v] Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are the three supreme gods of the Hindu trinity. Lord Brahma is considered the creator of the universe, Lord Vishnu its preserver and Lord Shiva represents the principle of destruction.

3.7 *Hamlet* in Mizoram

One region where *Hamlet* has lately become immensely popular is the northeastern state of Mizoram, which largely deviates from mainstream India in culture due to its curious blend of "tribalism and Westernization." First translated into the Mizo language about forty years ago *Hamlet* has in recent years become an obsession for the Mizos. Ania Loomba notes:

> *Hamlet* is today being performed in roadside theatres, in tiny town halls, and in the open air. Even more popular are tape recordings of the play, which blare out at little market kiosks and are duplicated in large numbers….Players wear T-shirts with "Hamlet" inscribed on them and claim that performing the play has profoundly affected their outlook on life. A man reads from a script to a crowd of children, asking them, "Will you avenge your father? The sword you choose should not be pointed but blunt. It should be dipped in poison. Do you understand? That's what a real king would say."[74]

The reasons for this extreme fascination for *Hamlet* in the state of Mizoram have not been explored so far. But responding to a few probings in this direction some Mizos offered hazy explanations like, "we are a melancholy people, and that is why the play touches us, that is why it is more popular than other Western dramas." When asked why *Hamlet* is played in Western costumes they replied, "That's because we have no theatrical tradition of our own. In fact, we have no traditions at all, we aren't like the rest of India, you know. So we can make everything our own."[75] I daresay a more credible explanation behind this sudden rise in popularity could be an extremely successful Mizo stage version of *Hamlet*. Or it could be the effect of one of the travelling companies of the Parsi theatre that successfully aimed towards an extensive popularisation of Shakespeare. These theatre troupes that had ventured as far as Burma and Singapore

could have easily passed through the border state of Mizoram. Unfortunately there is no systematic record of Shakespearean plays in this region to provide valuable insight or if there is one, it has successfully been hidden away from common view. Mizoram, still struggling for an identity in the dominant mainstream Indian culture has, so far, failed to draw serious interest from scholars and theatre historians.

Pankaj Butalia's film *When Hamlet Came to Mizoram* (1989) tries to deal with the Mizo euphoria for *Hamlet*. It is not interested why *Hamlet* is enacted by the Mizos but merely offers random glimpses of a few Mizo performances. The Mizos have apparently never or rarely enacted the full play. Mizo versions of *Hamlet* cut out the play within the play, thus simplifying the revenge factor or often Horatio is called away to his job as senior technician at the Aizwal hospital and Laertes doesn't appear because of a fight with his girlfriend. "The film constantly places the Mizo obsession with *Hamlet* within the context of the Christianization of Mizoram, juxtaposing scenes from the performances with the singing of hymns." It ends neatly with Hamlet dying to the strains of "I long for my Saviour's Face." [76]

3.8 Shakespeare in Sanskrit Translations

There have also been several Sanskrit versions of Shakespearean plays, obviously meant more for reading rather than for performance. The earliest of these was a translation of *The Midsummer Night's Dream* by R. Krishnamacharya in 1892. A Sanskrit version of *The Merchant of Venice* was however staged in 1964.Targetted to a very narrow section of the society it never aimed for popularity. Deserving special mention is an interesting Sanskrit adaptation of *Hamlet* called *Candrasenah:*

Durgadesasya Yuvarajah (1980), done by a group of scholars. Here Hamlet is viewed not as a prince with a philosophical bent of mind but as a seeker after Truth. Hamlet's world-weariness assumes greater proportions in this version. His mental make up is shown to be predominated by the *sattvic* mode.[vi] It is his preference to turn inward revealed in his introspective soliloquies, which speaks of his *sattvic* nature. Macbeth is an example of the *rajasic* mode as King Lear of the *tamasic*. In this adaptation the famous soliloquy "To be or not to be" acquires special significance in the sense that the question as "to act or not to act" shows the insignificance of worldly activity. Hence what is considered a tragic flaw becomes a philosophical virtue from this point of view. In keeping with the Sanskrit tradition, the noble Prince does not die on the stage but it is suggested that he is leaving this world of *maya* or illusion to a higher world not perceptible to the common man. The whole play is reduced to three acts and is a perfect model of literary artistry.[77]

3.9 Some Problems in Intercultural Experimenting

The intermingling of Indian and European cultures and traditions has not proved to be an easy task for many theatre professionals. It has been comparatively easy where the story is changed to an entirely new one under Indian settings, as in the case of *Raktaksi* (page 58). But translating Shakespeare into native language and dialects has continued to be a challenging factor. Poet Raghuvir Sahay's translation of *Macbeth* in Hindi at the *National School of Drama* production in 1982, reflected subjective choices

[vi] According to the Indian psycho/philosophic theory each person is predominated by one of the three basic natures*; sattvic, rajasic* or *tamasic*. The first kind aims at light and knowledge, the second kind is active but its activities are limited by selfish desires and the third kind is dull and inert, its mind is dark and confused and its every action is aimless submitting to external influence and environment.

rather than a sense of confrontation between the two cultures – a tendency that reflects his own ease with the two languages.[78]

Other theatrical experiments like Utpal Dutt's translations (pages 39-40) were a means of bridging the gap between anglicised urban audiences and rural viewers.

Director Habib Tanvir vividly describes the problems of cultural transformation in his adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with a troupe of folk actors from an ethnic community, in an area called Chattisgarh:

> I did two little improvisations with my Chattisgarhi folk actors… One episode was from *A Midsummer Night's Dream* where the weaver, the Tinker, the Tailor etc. act out the tragedy of "Pyramus and Thisby." I assembled the scene in a few days as a demonstration of sorts. I chose it for the obvious reason that Shakespeare goes rural here and deals with rustic actors. Even this little episode, with my illiterate rural actors, had problems. This wasn't because they couldn't capture the vitality, the robustness and the apparent coarseness of those very funny rustics of Shakespeare's play. The problem was the scene in its totality. Its depth and dimension are experienced only through the comments and asides of the Duke and Duchess and the genteel people who are watching the folk performance… with comments and asides… I didn't have the actors to convey all this. Strangely, even to portray Shakespeare's rustics, there has to be somewhere a very refined actor… the important point is that the urban refinement in the actor is an essential prerequisite for any attempt at Shakespeare.[79]

In order to solve such problems of cultural translations, Tanvir took to multilingualism, which was the most significant aspect of his production, as described in a review:

> Ultimately Tanvir came back to the… *Dream* because it offered him the best strategy of bilingualism. The Duke and his entourage would speak English; the people of the woods would converse in Urdu and the artisans would opt for their [Chattisgarhi] dialect. The harassment of the artisans by Puck on a physical level would get reinforced by the use of a foreign tongue and that could be fun.[80]

Such intercultural experiments have been a challenge for many Indian directors adapting Shakespeare. Although *The Merchant of Venice* was the most popular of all the comedies, its appropriation proved to be the most difficult. The real stumbling block is

the racial hostility between the Christians and the Jews of which there is no Indian equivalent. In his translation, Bharatendu has substituted the Christian by *Arya* (Hindu) and the Jew by *Jain* (person belonging to the Jaina religion). There is indeed a history of *Saiva* (one sect in Hinduism) and *Jain* hostility in Tamil Nadu in the sixth and seventh centuries but it is long forgotten and had never acquired the proportions of the Christian-Jew animosity. Due to this lack of a proper equivalent of the Christian-Jew issue, the translation though commendable, does not lend much credibility to Shylock's agony in those famous lines in Act III iii: 46-47 (He hath disgraced me, and hindered me half a million; laughed at my losses, mocked at my gains…). That Bharatendu himself was unsure of his substitution is revealed when the word "Christian" is retained in his translation of Shylock's aside "I hate him for he is a Christian" (I iii: 37). Besides the Jew-Christian opposition "various allusions in it were also not easy to negotiate. Bharatendu's replacement of 'Troilus' by 'Trivikram,''Cressida' by 'Kamini,' 'Dido' by 'Jayalakshmi,' and 'Carthage' by 'Kanpur' (V i: 1) in the dialogues between Lorenzo and Jessica (*The moon shines bright. In such a night as this*) completely denudes them of all traces of Greco-Roman association without creating a meaningful Indian alternative."[81] Later translators realized the futility of looking for Indian alternatives for such issues as the Jew-Christian relationship and made no attempts in this direction.

To cite another example of intercultural experimenting, a presentation of *King Lear* as a Kathakali dance drama at the Edinburgh Festival in 1990 has been a target of much ridicule both for Western and Indian critics:

> By refashioning a script into an idiomatic non-poetic language aligned to Kathakali's largely non-verbal tradition, the production rendered Shakespeare's text, with its dense narrative and complex interweaving of plots and sub-plots, thin and greatly reduced in power… the type-denoting Kathakali make-up easily transformed Shakespeare characters

> into stereotypes, all either absolutely virtuous or… evil. Cordelia and the King of France represented absolute virtue and Goneril and Regan absolute evil, thus destroying the moral complexity of the play and the equally complex psychological interplay within and between the characters.[82]

More successful adaptations include *Barnam Vana*, a Hindi version of *Macbeth* by B.V. Karanth in 1982 and a production of *Othello* in Bombay in 1990. Karanth presented Sahay's new verse translation in Hindi at the *National School of Drama*, focussing more on the stylised form like the method of acting, lighting and music rather than the structure of the Indian folk tradition, *Yakshagana*. He kept as close as possible to Shakespearean language and plot, and for costumes he followed a different strategy:

> [Karanth]… stated that *Yakshagana* characters, who are from Indian mythology, have fixed dresses. In fact they are recognized from the headgear they wear. So, in order not to replicate these customs and confuse the audience, he has had to base them on the traditional theatre costumes of Asian countries like Bali, Japan, Cambodia, Burma and Indonesia.[83]

The language and psychological complexity of the Renaissance text was maintained while being enriched with a stylized indigenous idiom, the total effect not being merely decorative but leading to a process of transculturation. By transculturation is meant a transformation of the whole cultural setting and background but plot remaining the same as the original.

The recent production of *Othello* in Bombay in 1990 drew in large audiences for its glamour and novelty. Its popularity could partly be attributed to its cast of well-known film stars. It did not focus on cultural divisions as in the original play and was typified as a tragedy of jealousy and misunderstanding. Such culturally neutral English adaptations are continuing to be produced in the contemporary theatre of urban India.

3.10 *Shakespeareana* and the Decline of Shakespeare

No discussion of the reception of Shakespeare in Indian theatres and cinemas will be complete without special mention of the travelling troupe of the Kendal couple (Geoffrey and Laura), *Shakespeareana* which performed Shakespeare's plays in different Indian towns in the nineteen-forties, fifties and sixties. This theatre troupe covered almost the entire India from Himachal Pradesh in the north to Kerala in the south to Manipur in the east to urbane Bombay in the west. The Kendals used many Indian artistes and musicians in their performances in India. Many later famous film personalities in India like Utpal Dutt and Shashi Kapoor are the products of Kendal's theatre. Shashi Kapoor married the elder daughter of the Kendals, Jennifer who also acted in some Indian films. In contrast to the Parsi theatre, which transformed Shakespeare into a melting pot of ideas, glamour and sensation and spread it among the masses, *Shakespeareana* represented a pure British Shakespeare presence within India, drawing admiration only from the elite. When Geoffrey Kendal claims in his autobiography that, "my favourite audience is Indian school girls… they always get thoroughly involved in the play" and that the Indian audience, "really are the best in the world, nothing escapes their attention," he refers to one class of Indians trained in the appreciation of Elizabethan drama.[84] The diary kept by Geoffrey Kendal provided the basis of the later famous film of Ivory Merchant, *Shakespeare Wallah* (1965) that pits the decline of the Kendals (Buckinghams in the film) against the growing popularity of Bombay films. In fact, the performances of Shakespeare in Indian theatre and the cinema world showed a gradual decline within a few decades after the Kendals.

The Theatre and Television Association of India have listed the plays of Shakespeare in Indian languages, till 1989. The total number is 431 (Marathi 81, Bengali 73, Hindi 57, Urdu 46, Kannada 36,Tamil 34, Gujurati 31, Malayalam 18, Sindhi 16, Punjabi 16, Telugu 10, Sanskrit 7 and Oriya 6). *Hamlet* has been attempted the most (50). Next in number are *Othello* (47) and *The Merchant of Venice* (47).[85] The popularity of *Hamlet* in India is clearly reflected in these figures.

3.11 The Revival of Shakespeare

In the last few years Delhi has seen a "Shakespeare revival." The *United Players' Guild* (UPG), an amateur group of dramatists and playwrights, has been exclusively dedicated to reintroducing Shakespeare to the masses. Shakespearean who never wrote purely for the Elizabethan aristocracy, has however been relegated to an "elitist position" in India, which Roysten Abel and Lushin Dubey of the UPG wanted to reverse. They wanted "to bring Shakespeare back to the common man by making it watchable, entertaining and brief."[86] The National School of Drama, New Delhi, has revived this transculturation of Shakespeare. As mentioned earlier (page 64), Shakespeare has already caught the imagination of Kathakali artists. Arjun Raina invented a form by fusing Shakespeare with Kathakali, which he termed as *Khelkali*. According to him, *Khel* is playing and *Kali* is dancing and this (*Khelkali*) leads to improvising freely while interpreting old tales and creating old stories.[87] He presented a scene from *The Midsummer Night's Dream* as *The Magic Hour* and performed his new style in the rural areas of Himachal Pradesh.

This transculturation has also gone into films. A new television serial *Deewarein* is a local adaptation of *Hamlet*. A 100 million plus dollar film based on *Hamlet* has been planned by Tarsem Singh.[88] The film named *Aditya* is about a Rajput Prince who avenges his father's murder even though it causes the downfall of his own kingdom. It is during a hunting expedition that he kills his uncle and stepfather. The role of the prince will be played by a much sought after actor in India, Hrithik Roshan. The film is being shot at Jodhpur Fort in Rajasthan, India and at different locations in England. It will be in English but the script prepared has not used the Bard's language. Another film, *Mian Maqbool* directed by Vishal Bharadwaj has been recently released in the year 2004. It is an adaptation of Shakespeare's kaleidoscopic close-up of human frailties in *Macbeth*. Yet another example is *The Complete Works of Shakespeare* (abridged) that has been performed by the *Scene Stealers* at Kamani Theatre in May 2000.

4 THE POPULARITY OF SHAKESPEARE IN INDIA

The Indian response to Shakespeare is not only widespread, stretching over a vast region conspicuous by its linguistic and cultural diversities, but also of the longest duration as far as any other foreign writer is considered. The popularity and growth of Shakespeare in general, and *Hamlet* in particular to which I will turn later, is not difficult to explain and forms the subject matter of this chapter.

4.1 The Causes of Shakespeare's Popularity

As already mentioned, the growth of Shakespeare has been marked in the pre-independence colonial period, particularly in Bengal and Maharashtra. There were socio-political reasons. A subject race fired by nationalistic, reforming and revivalist spirits wanted to catch up with the rulers in what was considered at that time as superior and more civilized. This imperative no longer existed in the post-colonial period. But Shakespeare as a cultural icon had already made his mark and continued to be revered by the anglophile Indian elite even after independence. The contribution of the educational institutions in the history of the Indian reception of Shakespeare has been largely towards the construction of a canonical image of the playwright. The knowledge produced in the academics has hardly penetrated into the larger literary community that responded to Shakespeare in a haphazard manner but perhaps more creatively and with a greater measure of freedom.

The Western infusion that was initially received with alacrity by academia was later absorbed into the cultural mainstream of the Indian languages in a variegated manner. This infiltration proved to be relatively easy due to to the "presence of unusually receptive elements in the mother culture. The local culture of most states or regions could absorb Shakespeare within its inherent structure and, in turn, be reshaped and inseminated by Shakespearean influence."[1] Preissnitz calls this "the ubiquitousness of Hinduism, which was adept at adapting to diverse regional and religious requirements."[2] Shakespearean drama continued to hold appeal for the Indians due to numerous other factors. There are striking similarities with the theatrical conventions of Sanskrit drama like invisibility, soliloquy, the existence of a fool, play within a play, off-stage voices, pantomime, poetic diction, background music etc in spite of philosophical and cultural differences between classical Indian and Elizabethan societies. Besides, there are similarities of occult and astrology in Indian epics and Shakespearean dramas, which have been analyzed in details by Shweta Sehgal.[3]

Another reason for the wide acceptance of Shakespearean drama by the Indian audience is the parallels one finds between the plots of Shakespeare and the Indian epics. Ancient Indian literature is full of epics, the two most widely known being the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Several Indian scholars have tried to draw similarities between many characters in Indian epics and those of Shakespearean drama. Cordelia in *King Lear* has been compared with Goddess Durga who killed the evil demon Maisasura (buffalo-headed demon).[4] Both were compassionate and loving but did not hesitate to take arms against injustice. This is an accepted philosophy in Hinduism. In the discourse before the great *Mahabharata* battle, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna how the Lord Himself

comes in different ages in order to protect the virtuous and to destroy the wicked, to remove *adharma* (immorality, impiety etc) and to establish *dharma* (morality) in the following lines:

> For the protection of the good, for the destruction
> of the wicked and for the establishment of righteousness,
> I am born in every age.
> (*Geeta* iv: 8)

Hindu ethics believes in compassion and tolerance towards evil but to a point and does not hesitate to use violence for the establishment of *dharma*. Parallels have also been found in *Pericles* and the character Shakuntala in the epic *Mahabharata* as presented by poet Kalidasa in his famous play, *Shakuntala*.[5] The central philosophy of both plays is the affirmation of the transcendental principles of *satyam*, *sivam* and *sundaram* (truth, beauty, and goodness). In the two plays, higher values like love, charity, compassion, altruism, forgiveness etc have been pursued and inferior values like hatred, anger, selfishness, revenge etc have been discarded. In *Pericles*, for example, the titular hero feels a supreme kind of joy when he is united with his lost wife Thasia and daughter Marina. In a similar manner, Dusmanta experiences infinite joy and bliss, i.e. *Brahmananda* when he is united with his wife Shakuntala and son, Bharata. Gautam Ghosal has made a useful collection of all critical appreciations by Indian scholars on Shakespeare in the book *Indian Thoughts on Shakespeare*.[6]

Henry Wells and H.H. Anniah Gowda have collaborated in an extensive and fruitful comparison of the likenesses of Shakespeare’s last plays and classical Indian drama in the book entitled *Shakespeare Turned East*.[7] A detailed study of this outstanding piece of work will show that Shakespeare bears much closer affinity with Sanskrit drama than with other major Asian theatres like the Chinese and the Japanese.

And there are certain astonishing similarities between Shakespeare and Sanksrit plays, not to be found in other Elizabethan or even in any other Western plays, for that matter. Without delving into details it is pertinent to give a brief overview of the contents of this book. The theatres of Kalidasa (4^{th} century A.D.) that marked the pinnacle of Indian drama and Shakespeare were highly stylized and must be acknowledged as among the most essentially poetic and least prosaic that the world has ever known. The supple imagination, abundance of images, variety of themes and the interestingly smooth style of the language where meanings become less easy to decipher mark strong poetic elements in Shakespeare like in *The Tempest*, *Twelfth night*, *Measure for Measure*, *King Lear*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, The Henry Fourth plays and *Antony and Cleopatra* as also in Kalidasa, especially in his most celebrated play, *Shakuntala*. Bhasa's (2^{nd} century B.C.?) *Swapnavasavadatta* (*The Dream of Vasavadatta*), which is considered as one of the world's masterpieces in romantic pathos and Kalidasa's *Malavikagnimitira* have been vividly compared with Shakespeare's romantic comedies, especially with *The Winter's Tale* in their prevailing spirit and romantic outlook. The finest of Sanskrit plays like Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and Bhavabhutti's (7th century A.D.?) *Uttaramacharita* (*The Later Story of Rama*) boast of powerful scenes of reminiscences. Likewise it is to be acknowledged that many of the most powerful scenes in Shakespeare's dramatic romances are those expressing the pathos of reminiscence, as Prospero's account of his early experiences on his enchanted island, Leontes' recollections of Hermione, Belarius' account of his adventures on the kidnapping of the British princes, and Pericles' memories of his lost wife and daughter. The violent and sudden turns in incident and fortune occur with striking similarity in both Sanskrit and Shakespearean plays. As in

Sanskrit plays, one comes across frequent allusions to myths and ancient folklore in Shakespearean drama like *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *The Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Pericles* and *Hamlet*. The garden and floral imagery, which abounds in Shakespeare, especially in his sonnets is also found, even in greater abundance in the most exalted Sanskrit plays. In the same way Shakespeare's brilliant use of the pastoral elements evinced in *The Winter's Tale* has been compared with the celebrated lyrical and dramatic literature of the *Gita Govinda* by Jayadeva (12th century A.D.). Sri Harsha's (7th century A.D.) *Ratnavali* and *Priyadarsika* are found analogous to *Pericles* with common themes of lost daughters, disguise, recognition and family union. Like Shakespeare "Harsha is concerned with love both private and cosmic."[8] *Pericles* can also be aptly compared with Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* where after prolonged misery and suffering comes family union and happiness. Another common element in Sanskrit drama and Shakespearean plays like *Cymbeline* is the epic usage. Sanskrit drama is however more strongly marked by this feature as a larger number of its plays have epic sources as their subject matter to create literature singularly rich in poetic splendour. Again, the diversity of action and characters in *Cymbeline* has been paralleled with Sudraka's (period not known) *Mrcchakatika* or *The Little Clay Cart*. The type of humour exhibited in both these comedies is surprisingly alike. Cloten, who is the chief humorous figure in *Cymbeline* and his counterpart Samsthanaka are strongly alike in character and unworthy of their princely position. Furthermore, Bhavabhutti's masterpiece *Uttararamacharita* (*The Later Story of Rama*) presents an extraordinary parallel to Shakespeare's story of the two princes, Guiderius, Arviragus and their foster father, Belarius. The quality of melodrama depicted in *Cymbeline* has been compared with the advanced form of melodrama depicted in

Bhavabhutti's *Malatimadhava*. Kalidasa's *Shakuntala* and *Meghaduttam* (*The Cloud Messenger*) match the consummate mastery and suavity in dramatic verse of *The Tempest*. The exceptionally keen awareness of nature is another common thread running through Shakespeare's *Tempest* and three of Kalidasa's extant plays which are considered to be hymns to nature as *Malavikagnimitra*, *Vikaramorvasiya* and the supreme monument in dramatic art to the splendour and allurement of nature, *Shakuntala*. Such lavishness in nature imagery is also observed in Bhavabhutti's *Uttararamacharita* and *Malatimadhava*. *The Tempest* and *Shakuntala* are analogous in many respects. Both deal with common elements like human relations with nature, the sanctity of parenthood, romanticism or love in its highest manifestations; both have idyllic settings, pastoral backgrounds and are of great spiritual significance. One curious aspect is the surprisingly similar stage convention applied both by Shakespeare and Sanskrit drama. Magic invisibility, a conspicuous feature in Elizabethan drama and most notably employed in *The Tempest* is also a leading feature in Bhavabhutti's *Uttararamacharita*, accounts for one of the most exquisite scenes in Kalidasa's *Vikramorvasiya* and is further used in his *Shakuntala*. Another common theatrical device is stage music increasingly marked in Sanskrit plays and in Shakespeare's dramatic Romances as *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *The Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as also in his tragedy, *Coriolanus*. Many other similarities between the two theatres have been detected and the list becomes unending. Thus *Shakespeare Turned East* is a curtain raiser as one becomes increasingly aware that classical Sanskrit theatre and Shakespearean drama have more in common than one might have initially expected. Such remarkable affinity between the theatres of two diverse cultures facilitated the absorption of Shakespeare into the Indian cultural milieu.

Some Indian scholars have a great adulation for Shakespeare so much so that he has been described as a *Brahmajnani* in the Vedantic philosophy.[9] The Supreme Being, *Brahman*, is both the effect and the material cause of the visible Universe, the all pervading soul and spirit of the Universe, the essence from which all created things are produced and into which they are absorbed. *Brahmajnani* is the being that has acquired the ultimate knowledge of *Brahman*.

4.2 The Causes of the Popularity of *Hamlet*

Among all the Shakespearean plays *Hamlet* has been ranked the most popular. One reason is that the story of *Hamlet* has been a fascinating subject for Indians. Legends of brother usurping brother's kingdom and even his wife are not alien to the Indian culture and heritage. In the *Ramayana*, King Sugriva usurps his brother Vali's throne and wife. Pushkar usurps Nala's wealth in the tale of *Nala and Damayanti*. In *Mahabharata*, Duryodhana usurps the title crown of the Prince of Pandavas after the latter goes into hiding, following the dice game and the House of Wax incident. Similar situations are also seen in the recorded history of India. Ashoka the Great (270 B.C. – 230 B.C.) killed his brothers to ascend the throne. Centuries later many Moghul kings committed patricide and fratricide to capture power.

The indecision and inner conflict of Hamlet against action as expressed in the soliloquy:

> To be or not to be, that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune…
>
> (III i: 58-60)

has been a subject of many discussions and comments. It has been considered as a reflection of the religious/political climate of the times, examined in terms of anticatholicism and described as a "feigned private meditation" by different critics.[10] This soliloquy can, to some extent, be compared with the similar inner conflict (*dwanda*) of Arjuna in his hesitation to raise arms against his own kinsmen in the battlefield of Mahabharata:

> Therefore, Krishna, it does not behove us to kill relations,
> the sons of Dhritrashtra. For how can we be happy after killing our own kingsmen.
>
> (*Geeta* i: 37)

Vikram Chopra tries to find out several notes of affinity between the values that govern the tragic world of Shakespeare and the wisdom reflected in Indian scriptures and literature. For example, the following passages of *Hamlet* bear close resemblace with Sanskrit passages both in form and meaning.[11] The similarity between the passage:

> Thou, know'st 'tis common--all that lives must die,
> passing through nature to eternity.,
>
> (I ii: 72-73)

and the following passage of the *Geeta* is striking:

> Indeed, certain is death for the born,
> and certain is birth for the dead;
> therefore, over the inevitable,
> you should not grieve.
>
> (*Geeta* ii: 27)

Horatio's equipoise, praised by Hamlet in the following lines:

> A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
> Hast ta'en with equal thanks;….
>
> (III ii: 60-61)

is very similar to the stable mind of a sage described as *Stithaprajna* by Krishna:

> He who is not shaken by adversity, and who in prosperity
> does not hanker after pleasures, who is free from attachment,
> fear and anger, is called a sage-of-steady-Wisdom.
>
> (*Geeta* ii: 56-57)

Hamlet's reflection over:

> What is a man,
> If his chief good and market of his time
> Be but to sleep and feed? A beast no more.
>
> (IV iv: 35-37)

is an echo of popular thought:

> A man is no different from an animal if he is only limited to food, sleep,
> fear and sexual pursuits.
>
> (*Hithapodesa* or Fables)

Chopra has gone to the extent of describing Hamlet as *Sadhaka* (somebody who performs penance) and a *Brahmajijna'su* (a selfless ascetic having control over all desire). In support of this, Chopra points out the description by Hamlet of himself, a young man of thirty, as "man delights not me, nor woman neither" (I ii: 296-297). This interpretation of Hamlet, is no doubt controversial.

Another interesting fact behind the enormous popularity of *Hamlet* is its plot, which coincides with the plot of Hindi movies. The film industry in Bombay (now Mumbai) has a strong grip over the Indian masses. Consider the plot; a boy and his mother live with his uncle. The boy believes his father was killed in an accident and his generous uncle gave shelter to him and his widowed mother, for which he is ever grateful. But when he grows up, he starts getting serious dreams narrating that his uncle had murdered his father. He is puzzled and does not know whether to believe his dreams or not. He goes into a depression and even begins to neglect his girlfriend. His friends stage a play in which they enact the scene, he sees in his dreams. From his uncle's

reactions, the hero realizes that his dreams have revealed the truth. His uncle also realizes that his nephew knows the truth and sends him away for some kind of training. He sends some of his men with instructions to kill the hero on his way. But the hero turns the tables on his assailants and returns unscathed. The uncle then arranges another round of treachery, but the hero's friends learn of the plot and develop a scheme of their own. A brawl ensues in which the uncle is killed and the hero and his girlfriend live happily ever after. This is the basic plot of innumerable Hindi films like *Suraj* (in the sixties) *Dharamveer* (seventies), *Anadi* (eighties) and *Ashoka* (nineties). In the swashbuckling sixties the scene was set in some obscure village, which has now been replaced by business empires. Whatever the case all India is crazy over Hindi films. With a few minor variations, the plot narrated above could easily be that of *Hamlet*. Ophelia commits suicide, but the heroine in Hindi movies lives on. And in Shakespeare's play, the young prince falls prey to the poisoned sword, but the other hero lives on. Indians love the hero who surmounts all obstacles and ends up winning. So while following Shakespeare's narrative they relate the story of Hamlet to their favourite hero who experiences a similar tale, except that he wins in the end. This close resemblance with the stereotyped film formulas is what endears *Hamlet* to the Indian audience. And why should this be different from, say, *Macbeth* or *Othello*? Because basically Hamlet is a good guy with a noble spirit, who takes up arms to destroy only evil, whereas Macbeth kills his loyal friend and Othello, his faithful wife. This, the Indian audience cannot identify with. The Indian audience is accustomed to the protagonist or hero who purely embodies noble qualities and has no trace of evil in him. Thus it is only Hamlet who can step into the shoes of the Indian hero and is worthy of applause on stage.

The contribution of the Indian playwrights/adapters towards the popularity of *Hamlet* should not be downplayed. It is to be noted that amongst the most successful adaptations of Shakespeare (from the popularity point of view) in all the major theatres of India, it is *Hamlet* which clearly takes the lead. To remind ourselves, the playwrights of these popular *Hamlet* versions were Dutt (Bengali), Agarkar (Marathi), Nana Joag (Marathi), Lucknawi (Urdu), Mudaliyar (Tamil) and Kuvempur (Kannada). Of these the Marathi version of *Hamlet* by Agarkar entitled *Vikara Vilasit* (pages 42-43), deserves the highest credit. It is perhaps a sheer coincidence that the most successful appropriations in the four major theatres of India (Bengali, Marathi, Parsi and Tamil) happened to be that of *Hamlet*. Apart from the ingenuity of the playwrights another reason could be that the story line of *Hamlet* appealed most to the Indian audience. Whatever be the reason the remarkable success of these *Hamlet* adaptations encouraged future translators and playwrights to continue experimenting with the play and produce further adaptations of the same. In the process the audience got more acquainted and more fascinated with this Shakespearean tragedy than with any other.

William F. Hansen has gone to the extent of indicating the possibility of the origin of the story of *Hamlet* to India or Iran. He points out that the story:

> …. may have spread within Europe by diffusion or descended among Indo-Europeans by inheritance from the proto-Indo-European repertoire or even been transmitted by a combination of these means. The probability that the story is an old Indo-European legend would be stronger if it could be shown that a variant of the story existed in India or Iran.[12]

This conclusion of Hansen may be far-fetched but no doubt, there exist great similarities between Shakespearean plays and Indian epics. These aspects have not been discussed in greater details, as it is not the central theme of this thesis.

In view of the popularity of Shakespeare in India, I consider it a worthwhile experiment to appreciate one of his plays in the light of Sanskrit poetics. The glorious stage history of the Indian *Hamlet* draws me to this particular play as an ideal beginning. Also Lear, Macbeth and Othello are not heroes like Hamlet. They suffer from severe deficiencies in character unlike their counterpart. Hamlet's 'deficiency' is his sensitivity, which does nothing to undermine his character as a hero, rather enhances it. His image as a prototype of the Indian hero makes it a perfect model for interpretation. I will analyse the play *Hamlet* with particular reference to the theories of *rasa* and *dhvani* as these canons form the very pillars of Sanskrit Poetics and must have to a large extent influenced the reception of Shakespeare/*Hamlet* in India, indirectly, if not directly. Sanskrit canons and theoretical concepts, though unfamiliar to the majority of the Indian theatregoers, have nevertheless, percolated through the masses, without their realizing it, through their perception of Sanskrit classical dramas. Sanskrit theatre, obviously guided by these canons has shaped the aesthetic sensibility of the Indian audience, which in turn has influenced the reception of Shakespeare in India, through renderings, adaptations or otherwise.

5 BASIC THEORIES OF SANSKRIT POETICS
RASA AND DHVANI

In Sanskrit poetics three critical concepts are central; *rasa*, *dhvani* and *rasa-dhvani*. These theories were originally propounded by sage Bharata and sage Bhartrhari in the 4th century B.C. and 7th century A.D. respectively and subsequently developed by others till the 11th century A.D. V.K. Chari and A.C. Sukla have lucidly explained these concepts in two recent articles, specifically aimed towards readers, alien to these modes of thought.[1] The materials in the present chapter are heavily drawn from these two articles.

5.1 The Theory of *Rasa*

Rasa is a term used in the Upanishads explaining the nature of the ultimate Reality (*Brahman*), which literally means an all-pervading existence. According to the Upanishads, "the ultimate Reality is the all-pervading existence (*sat*) the nature of which is absolute consciousness (*cit*) and delight (*ananda*). *Rasa* is the synonym of this absolute delight or *ananda*."[2]

Rasa, in Sanskrit literally means juice; it particularly refers to the juice of a creeper named 'Soma' which is now extinct.[3] This juice was noted for its delicacy, sweetness and mild intoxicating value. Its application for explaining the delightful nature of the ultimate Reality might have been metaphorical in the beginning of the Upanishadic

age (4000 B.C. – 2000 B.C.), but subsequently it became a dead metaphor and in its denotational use, it became a synonym for *ananda* (bliss).

The sage Bharata uses the term *rasa* for the first time as an aesthetic concept in his treatise on theatrical performance called *Natyasastra,* which is supposed to have been compiled in the 4th Century B.C., in order to explain the nature of the audience's experience of the dramatic performance. He refers to *rasa* as the delight that the audience derives from its experience of the generalized emotions presented in the drama. Bharata compares this wholesome aesthetic relish to the ecstatic experience of the ultimate Reality, which was otherwise possible through Vedic rituals, rigorous penance and austerity. The Brahmins (the priestly class) believed that human experience is basically emotion-oriented as all our actions and experiences are always indicative of an emotion. So there is no action without displaying an emotion, or in other words, representation of an action entails the display of an emotion. The experience of these emotions in their individual forms is the cause of human misery. The remedy for this misery is therefore to experience the emotions in their general forms *(sadharanya*). According to Bharata, an emotion presented on stage is necessarily free from individual (personal) affiliation and therefore attains a pure or general status. He calls this purified or unaffliliated emotion as *rasa* in drama. Thus, the spiritual implication of the term *rasa* is that the nature of the ultimate reality called 'Brahman' is at par with unaffliliated emotion. The most precise way of understanding this central point of Sanskrit literary theory is that the performance of an action in the world of reality, in terms of man's emotional response, is always personal and it causes unhappiness because of its individual affliction, whereas its presentation (or representation) in a fictional form is free from this personal affliction and

automatically elevates the experience of this emotion into an extraordinary delight (*camatcara*). In dramatic performance, this presentation is complete in its audiovisual form and therefore the directness of its experience is necessarily of a superior order, than what appears in the narrative form of literature, where the audience has to visualize the whole presentation mentally. So, dramatic performance necessarily manifests an emotion as *rasa*.

Bharata's *Rasa-sutra* (axioms of *rasa*) is basically a doctrine of dramatic emotions and offers an analytical exposition of the logic behind them. The doctrine of *rasa*, as originally formulated by Bharata in the sixth and seventh chapters of the *Natya-sastra*, rests on certain assumptions. In the sixth chapter he describes the method of the generation of *rasa*.

(1) Emotions are manifested in drama, as in life, by a combination of situational factors.

(2) There is a specific number of emotions. According to Bharata there are eight primary emotions (*sthayibhavas* or simply *bhavas*).

(3) These primary emotions or *bhavas* are permanent irreducible mental states. These alone can be developed into *rasas*. The eight emotions thus correspond to eight *rasas*. They are *rati* (love), *hasa* (laughter), *soka* (sorrow), *krodha* (anger/rage), *vesaha* (enthusiasm/courage/herosim), *bhaya* (fear), *jugupsa* (aversion/disgust) and *ascarya* (wonder). The eight corresponding *rasas* are *sringara*, *hasya*, *karuna*, *raudra*, *vira*, *bhayanaka*, *bibhatsa* and *adbhuta* respectively.

(4) In the theatre, an organisation of various emotions is depicted, but the weaker ones are subordinated to one dominant impression (emotion).

(5) Emotions are brought together in the theatre, not indiscriminately, but according to the logic of congruity and propriety.

Bharata says that *rasa* is generated in the theatre (*natya*) through the conjunction (*samyoga*) of three factors that accompany the emotions.

(a) Determinants that are expressive of an emotion, such as characters and situations (*vibhavas*).

(b) Physical gestures (*anubhavas*).

(c) Other transitory mental states of the characters (*vyabhicarins/vyabhicaribhavas*).

Determinants (***vibhavas***) -- The determinants of an emotion are those objects or factors, which generate that emotion. They are of two kinds. The first is the primary or the generative factor (*alambana vibhava*), which directly brings out the emotion in a person. This could be an object, person, scene, or even thought which excites a particular emotion e.g., a man may experience the emotion of love at the sight of his beloved. Here, the beloved is the generating factor of the feeling of love. However, the mere presence of the object is not enough to bring out certain feelings in us. Emotions, though object oriented, may lie dormant in our natures and may not manifest themselves without the presence of appropriate situational factors. This is called the exciting factor or *uddipana-vidbhava*. To cite an example, the feeling of love between two people is fully evoked with the presence of certain enhancing factors like privacy, moonlight, cool breeze, a stream flowing by and so on. These circumstances are secondary in importance and only help the emotion to exhibit itself.

Physical gestures (***anubhavas***) -- Emotional states will become objects of discourse only when expressed in an overt or visible manner, in speech, action or gesture. “The Sanskrit term for such behavioural expressions is *anubhava*, etymologically meaning that which follows or ensues from the feeling (as its effect).”[4] In drama these behaviourial expressions are the only means of presenting emotions and they are the subject matter of the dramatic presentation or enactment (*abhinaya*). According to Abhinavagupta (10th c. A.D.), expressing the emotions is leading others towards knowledge of those emotions. Hence these (shrugs, sidelong glances, knitting the eyebrows and so forth) are at once expressions as well as the actions exhibited (*abhinayas*). Bharata delineates how the emotions are caused and how they must be exhibited on stage. Grief arises from bereavement by death of a dear one, loss of property, experiencing the sorrow of those who are near to you and so on. These are its causes. It is exhibited by shedding tears, wailing, weeping, turning pale, a hoarse voice, sinking of the limbs, stretching or rolling on the ground, crying aloud, long and heavy breathing, trembling, numbness, loss of memory, going mad, becoming immobilized, turning hysterical, swooning, dying etc. These are the expressions and physical gestures of an emotion. From the various physical gestures and expressions mentioned above, it can be seen that some like shedding tears, changing colour and trembling are bodily conditions that directly emanate from certain psychic states whereas others like hitting the head, wailing and so on are more voluntary gestures and are capable of being controlled. Some gestures can also be acquired in the course of social experience. Bharata draws a distinction between these voluntary expressions and involuntary reactions of an emotion. Strictly speaking, tears, trembling, turning pale or fainting may not be called

gestures since they are beyond human control. They are symptomatic reactions caused directly by certain psychic conditions and are called *sattvikabhavas* or mental reactions as they are a direct result of mental states. Bharata therefore treats them as a separate class and lists eight of them; stupefaction or immobilization, perspiration, horripilation (goose-pimples), change of voice, trembling, change of colour, tears and fainting. These symptoms are exceedingly difficult to exhibit on the stage and can be accomplished only through extreme concentration on the part of the actors or actresses so that they actually bring themselves to feel these mental states or successfully simulate them.

Transitory Mental States or Moods (***vyabhicaribhavas/vyabhicarins***) **--** The primary mood portrayed in the drama attracts other ancillary feelings. No emotion, however basic can appear in its purest state without involving other secondary feelings. Thus love-in-union is associated with a host of other feelings like bashfulness, infatuation, agitation, eagerness, pride, cogitation, vacillation, gladness and many others. Love-in-separation attracts self-deprecation, doubt, fatigue, jealousy, brooding, anxiety, drowsiness, dreaming, malady, fits and so on. These feelings are transient and are called *vyabicaribhavas* or *samcarins*. Without the reinforcement of the fleeting emotions, no emotion is developed into an enduring mood. What we call a mood is a whole sequence of different feelings that, intermingling and interacting with one another, emerge as a single dominant strain or impression. Hence, dramatic performance consists not only in presenting emotions through their objects and expressions, but also in developing an emotion into a sustained mood by exhibiting an entire emotional sequence of alternating strands.

However, the transitory feelings are not absolutely necessary for the development or expressions of emotions -- they are only a means of reinforcing and enhancing it. “Emotions are caused by their objects, manifested by their expressions and nourished by other ancillary feelings.”[5] But Bharata lays emphasis on the introduction of other secondary emotions in order to sustain or prolong the mood throughout the whole length of the drama.

Their Conjunction (***samyoga***) **--** For a situation to be portrayed as emotive there must first be an object that excites an emotion in someone. That person should be aware of the emotion and its cause. Second, the person must not merely feel the emotion, but express it in outward behaviour. The ancillary feelings are not a necessary condition for a situation to be emotive, only a factor in its development. Thus, the entire logic of emotional discourse seems to hinge on the objects and expressions.

But, as seen before, emotions, objects and expressions are not necessarily bound to each other in any constant relation. None of these factors stand in any fixed relation to any particular emotion, each, by itself is common to more than one emotion. A lion might evoke different feelings of wonder, fear, heroism or wrath in different persons. A particular woman may be an object of love to her lover and cause indifference to a monk or even cause aversion in another. Similarly, an overt expression like tears could be the result of grief, fear or even ecstasy. Again, ancillary feelings, in different cases are not always related to the same primary emotion. Anxiety could be the result of fear, sorrow or love-in-separation.

In order to determine a correlation Bharata introduces another condition called *samyoga* or conjunction of the emotive factors. Abhinavagupta explains that "emotive causes and expressions are in no fixed relation to the emotions singly, but when the totality of conditions is given there is no inconstancy. Thus, where the death of a dear one is the circumstance, lamentation and tears are the behaviourial expressions, brooding, dejection and so on are the other feelings, the emotion cannot be anything but grief."[6]

5.1.1 Specific number of Emotions

Bharata lists as many as forty-one mental states each defined by its objects and expressions. Of these, only eight are regarded as basic or durable (*sthayins*) and can be developed into full-fledged dramatic emotions (*sthayibhavas* or *bhavas*). The remaining thirty-three can only function as subsidiary emotions. The eight basic emotions are love, comic laughter, grief, rage, heroism, fear, revulsion and wonder. Later writers have sought to include quietude or serenity as another distinct dramatic emotion. It has come to be accepted as another basic criterion especially after Abhinavagupta's eloquent plea on behalf of it. However, it still remains a subject of much controversy.[7] By quietude is understood a state of mental repose or serenity in which the mind is freed from all passions and perturbations and rests in itself, as it were. This is the condition that wise men and yogis are known to enjoy. Several critics have argued that such a state of yogic detachment is a negative state and implies a termination of all mental activity and perturbation and can hardly be called a *bhava* or emotion. Besides, they argue that such a state of inner subsidence would be extremely difficult to portray. Abhinavagupta

contradicts this line of thought and claims mental subsidence to be a positive state of inner bliss and equanimity. He strongly asserts that anything that can be presented and dramatised is perfectly capable of being dramatically interesting. It can be portrayed with the help of its associate feelings like world-weariness, disenchantment, aspiration, quest, thirst for knowledge etc. all of which ultimately lead to that supreme state of supernal joy. To cite an example, the life of Buddha has been a very appealing theme for many playwrights and choreographers. Finally, although this mental state of worldly detachment cannot be physically expressed, the very absence of any expressive gesture like intense and deep meditation may be taken as a kind of gesture.

5.1.2 Accessory or Transient Emotions

The remaining thirty-three emotions as listed by Bharata are discouragement (self-disparagement), debility (caused by both physical and mental conditions), apprehension (doubt, suspicion), envy, intoxication, world-weariness, indolence, depression, anxiety (worry), distraction, rumination (turning things over in the mind), contentment, shame, unsteadiness, jubilation, agitation, stupor, pride or arrogance, dejection, impatience (eagerness), sleep (drowsiness), amnesia, coma, awakening, indignation, dissimulation, ferocity, self-assurance (born of understanding), malaise, insanity, death (the state of mind accompanying death or the dying experience), fright and deliberation.

Certain conclusions can be drawn from the elaborate typology of emotions as delineated by Bharata.

(1) All the emotions, both stable and transient are defined by their causes and expressions.

Some of the states listed by Bharata as mental states such as debility, intoxication, sleep and so on are only physical conditions and some of them may be caused by purely physical factors like sleep by fatigue, disease etc. But what is meant here is not the physical conditions as such, but the mental states they give rise to.

(2) Whether Bharata's list of emotions is exhaustive enough to include all mental states, sensations and attitudes has been questioned. Feelings of desire like craving for a glass of cold water on a hot summer day or feelings like honour, hatred, jealousy, suspense etc. have not been included in his elaborate typology of emotions. Supporters of Bharata have defended this by pointing out that desire does not signify specific feelings and could mean almost any feeling—desire for water is thirst, desire for food is hunger, desire for a man or a woman is the sexual urge. Other feelings like hope, hatred, honour etc. are not clearly defined psychic states. Hate could be expressed as anger or disgust.

(3) Another subject of discussion is whether *bhakti* or the sentiment of devotion can be regarded as a legitimate aesthetic emotion. Theorists supporting this school of thought have claimed this to be a distinctive emotion far superior to other poetic feelings, which culminates in an elevated mental state of pure joy, unlike other human emotions.

(4) Abhinavagupta however, does not assign any special status to *bhakti* and calls it a substratum of santa or quietude. He also denies *bhakti* to be a removed psychic state of man and asserts that like any ordinary human emotion, it can be expressed outwardly in terms of human responses like happiness, pleasure, sorrow and pain. "The devotional mystic can go through the whole gamut of emotions in relation to his god, from erotic love to fear. He pines for his god, enjoys union with him, laments his separation, suffers grief and despair over the fallen condition of his soul, marvels at god's grandeur, is afraid of his wrath, is disgusted with his own body, by his sensuous attachment to worldly things, and, finally rests in God realization."[8]

(5) Some of the categories into which Bharata classifies the accessory emotions are not strictly separable from each other. For example, depression and dejection cannot be separated from each other. Despite minor inaccuracies, if any, in his classification, however, his crucial distinction between the stable and transient emotions cannot be disputed.

5.1.3 Durable and Transient Emotions

Bharata's most original contribution to the aesthetics of emotions is his distinction between the stable and the fleeting emotions. He never attempts a psychological explanation of his typology but asserts that certain emotions are more powerful than others and tend to dominate over them.

Abhinavagupta, Bharata’s commentator has attempted a more logical explanation of emotional human behaviour. He purports that the primary emotions that lie dormant in the mind are brought to the surface only when the appropriate objects present themselves. The objects merely serve to bring them to an active state and are called the instrumental causes (*nimitta-karana*) and not their inherent causes (*samanya-karana*). So when a man feels a stirring in him, it is because of his latent sexual urge in him, which brings out the feeling. It would be incorrect to say that the woman causes the sexual urge. In contrast, transient feelings like agitation, shame or indolence appear and disappear when their causes appear and disappear. But this explanation does not hold firm ground. It can be easily argued that the transient feelings are as much embedded in human nature as the basic emotions like love and aversion. Secondly, Abhinavagupta’s assertion that the basic emotions can exist in their forms without the appearance of their objects can be disputed. No emotion can be proved to exist without the presence of the objects and the expressions. Again, if the basic emotions can lie dormant in human nature, so can transitory ones. Both these emotions reveal themselves when appropriate objects and circumstances present themselves.

A more convincing explanation, which has again been provided by Abhinavagupta in favour of this distinction, is that, the transient emotions are not capable of existing independently and are meaningless unless attached to one of the primary emotions. As Abhinavagupta explains:

> for that reason i.e., since the transient emotions are not independent, when someone says, this man is wearied,’ the question arises, ‘Why is he like that?’ This indicates the contingent nature of that feeling. But when someone says, Rama is full of heroic fervour,’ the question ‘why’ is not asked. In such cases, the only question that can be asked is whether the given objects and circumstances are appropriate to the emotion indicated.

> "Similarly when we say two people are in love with each other, we do not question why—the condition is sufficient unto itself and is self-explanatory.[9]

The same logic is applicable to all the primary emotions:

> The transient states, however cannot find a resting point in their own nature or establish an independent context for themselves. Having no fixed identity or status, they move about with many different basic emotions, appearing and disappearing like bubbles and taking on the form and hue of the emotions they associate themselves with. A transient emotion is so called because 'it goes astray in many different directions,' with other emotions that are more powerful than itself.[10]

A fleeting emotion like agitation can appear in love or laughter, anger or revulsion. The emotion which is not swallowed up by other emotions whether friendly with it or unfriendly, which quickly dissolves the others into its own, a condition like the salt sea, which endures continuously in the mind, and which, in conjunction with other feelings and circumstances, attains to its fullest expression as *rasa* – that is the durable emotion.

Since the transitory states cannot result in any particular mood by themselves, the durable emotions alone can be developed into full-fledged aesthetic moods or *rasas*. They alone can be sustained through the whole length of the composition. The fleeting emotions only act as attendant feelings to the primary emotion helping to intensify and stabilize it.

The basic emotion rarely acts in a pure state without absorbing other major or minor emotions. One major emotion can assimilate another major emotion but only as its subsidiary. Thus, though love can momentarily occur in its pure form, it soon gets mixed up with feelings of wonder, laughter, even grief and with transient feelings like eagerness, bashfulness, envy, jubilation, anxiety, distraction etc. A transitory feeling can

also lead to other transitory feelings but they emanate from one main emotion which is the most powerful mood dominating all the other emotions. To sum up, we can say that

(1) Some transient emotions can emanate from more than one basic emotion.

(2) The basic emotion can lead to a number of transient, as well as, other basic emotions, which are subordinated to it.

(3) Even when it appears in the midst of a combination of others, the basic emotion does not change its form but proliferates, the other emotions lending it an effect of variegation. Thus, when a basic emotion is nourished as a principal theme throughout a composition by being exhibited repeatedly with its full paraphernalia of objects, expressions and accessories, it becomes a dominant or presiding emotion and this emotion in its generalized form is called *rasa*. This is the substance of Bharata's *Rasa-Sutra* (*rasa*-axioms).

Bharata advocates the introduction of various emotional strains in order to aid the stabilization of the primary emotion by way of intensifying and prolonging it. He believes that *rasa* is manifested through the conjunction of many different emotions. Sometimes the interaction of conflicting emotions lends more intrigue to the plot. In the treatment of love, for example, dramatists introduce quarrels between lovers and other elements in order to sustain the emotion and to avoid the feeling of satiety. It should not be forgotten, however, that only one of these emotions is to be established as the central theme. Two parallel moods would undermine the unity of impression. When two or more basic emotions are given prolonged treatment in the play, it depends on how the dramatist handles his subject matter, which of these would overpower the other. The *rasa* chosen to

be the dominant mood or emotion of the play spreads itself as a pervasive quality of the work through all its parts, whereas the other major emotions, which are drawn into the work by the force of the situation, powerful as they may be, are limited to certain parts of the work and therefore cannot hurt the preeminence of the main *rasa*. In fact, they will aid its intensification as well as spread it. V.K. Chari illustrates this by an example from *Hamlet*, where Hamlet in his first soliloquy in Act 1, scene ii, says "O that this too too solid flesh would melt...." The prevailing mood here, which is grief or sorrow, attracts other related feelings like revulsion and anger. His sense of being tarnished by his mother's adultery poisons his mind, which is reflected in lines 129--134, "…. How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world!" He cannot comprehend how the queen who asks him to stop mourning and return to normalcy, can take his father's death so lightly. In this soliloquy Hamlet's attitude reveals disillusionment and sorrow when he realizes the shallowness of his mother's love for his dead father. "There is pity expressed for his dead father, anger at the thought of his mother's hasty marriage and his own helplessness and muted anguish at the thought that his heart must break in silence. But these other, intervening feelings only serve to intensify Hamlet's tragic anguish and culminate in one dominant impression."[11]

Bharata, however, does not reject the possibility of creating a play in one emotional pattern dictating the entire tone of the work. He also adds that the conclusion of each drama is crucial for the final impression.

5.1.4 Friendly and Opposing Emotions

The various emotional strains running in a play have to be appropriately blended in order to produce an artful presentation in a drama. Any given emotion does not go with all other emotions. Certain emotions can be friendly towards or opposed to each other, following certain logic and depending on their own intrinsic nature. A particular emotion can sometimes consort with emotions opposed to its own nature, but only under certain conditions; these have been called the ‘opposing’ tones or emotions. Bharata has laid down certain guidelines for the combination of friendly and opposing emotions within one single play.

Some mental states are mutually incompatible with each other and cannot coexist whereas others can harmonize well at all times. Thus, one cannot be both attracted and repelled by the same object at the same time, nor can one feel pity and rage, or pity and fear, or love and fear towards the same person. On the other hand, certain emotions like love and wonder, love and mirth, heroism and fury, fear and disgust etc. can coexist. However, the congruity or incongruity also depends on situational factors. Sometimes opposing emotions can come and clash with each other in the same situation, for example, the feeling of love, pity and rage in the murder scene in *Othello*. Even opposing emotions can cohabit with each other and cease to be opposite under certain conditions, e.g. jealousy in love does not prove to be destructive all the time but may actually aid love. An emotion expressed by one person may produce different reactions in different persons. Thus, heroism in a warrior can produce wonder in his friends and dread in his enemies.

In determining mutual opposition between emotions the following factors must be taken into consideration,

(1) whether the contradictory emotions appear in the same locus (person) or in different loci;

(2) whether they appear in a locus at the same point of time and in the same circumstances or at different times and in different circumstances;

(3) whether they appear in the same locus successively or with other intervening emotions;

(4) whether they are caused by the same object or by different objects;

(5) whether they are treated as being equally powerful, or whether one of them is subordinated; and finally

(6) whether the opposition is between two basic emotions, between two transient ones, or, between a basic emotion and a transient emotion.

"Opposition between emotions is defined as the inability of two emotions, caused by the same object, to coexist in the same substratum at the same time and, consequently, the obstruction of one by the other, that is, one knowledge obstructing the other."[12] Obstruction in this context means when one emotion is repelled by the other, For instance, the knowledge that two people love each other will not allow the knowledge that the same persons detest each other. Love and disgust are naturally opposed to each other. Similarly, two transitory emotions can also be mutually incompatible, like satiety

and anxiety, eagerness and deliberation, elation and dejection. There can also be a natural repulsion between a stable and a transitory emotion like heroic feeling and depression, sorrow and elation, mirth and apprehension and so on.

However, natural opposition is not the sole reason for the opposition between emotions. The opposition actually occurs when two incompatible emotions directly confront each other.

Sanskrit critics have attempted a broad outline of the different kinds of opposing emotions. First, the emotions must arise in connection with the same object caused by that object and directed at it. This type of opposition has been termed "opposition due to the object being the same." Second, conflicting emotions must reside in the same person – this is "opposition due to the locus being the same." Third, the emotions must occur in quick succession, love and hate, pity and fear, wonder and revulsion etc. towards the same object. This is "opposition due to the rival emotions occurring without interval."[13] The lapse of time between two conflicting emotions may lead to the development of new circumstances justifying the emergence of the opposite emotion. Othello's initial love for Desdemona is not contradicted by his jealous fury at the end. Fourth, the opposite emotions must be equally powerful, for if one of the themes dominates, it will soon suppress its own opponent and establish its own tone. This may be called "opposition due the rival emotions being equally important."[14] Pity and wrath, both equally oppressing like Othello's contention in the murder scene, could keep on alternating for a while, until one finally succumbs to the other. In cases like these, it is always the so-called negative emotions like fury, fear and disgust, which tend to suppress their opponents. Thus when love and disgust of equal force are juxtaposed, disgust will supersede love. Love,

appearing together with fear, will be extinguished by fear, the heroic by fear, wonder by rage and so on. In any case, of course, opposition can happen only to an emotion that is treated as the principal meaning of the text (*vakyarthibhuta*), namely, to the basic emotion that is stabilised as the *rasa*. Further, it is possible within a single context of meaning and in a sentence with a univocal meaning. In polysemous cases, there can be no opposition since the sentence conveys two different meanings and should be treated as two different sentences (*vakyabheda*).

Generally speaking, opposition between emotions is removed:

(1) by locating the conflicting emotions in different substrata,

(2) by directing them to two different objects

(3) by subordinating one of them

(4) by introducing another emotion that is friendly to mediate between the opposites, and

(5) by not over displaying the emotion that is opposed to the dominant emotion of the play e.g. comic episodes when introduced in a tragedy, should not receive extended treatment.

V.K. Chari has worked out certain tables to make a clearer demarcation between the friendly and opposing emotions and their juxtapositon. These are illustrated below: [15]

TABLE I: CONCORDANT [FRIENDLY] AND DISCORDANT [OPPOSING] EMOTIONS

Basic Emotions	Concordant Emotions	Discordant Emotions
Erotic love	Heroism, the comic, wonder, fury (demoniacal love, not normal)	Disgust, tragic grief,[a] fear, fury (in normal cases), quietude (subsidence).
The comic	Erotic love, rage, fear	Grief , fear
Grief	Fear	Rage, the erotic, the comic, the heroic
Rage	Disgust, the heroic, the comic	Wonder, fear, grief, the erotic, quietitude
The heroic	Wonder rage, the erotic	Fear, disgust, grief, quietitude
Fear	Grief, disgust	Rage, wonder, quietude, the heroic, the comic
Disgust	Fear	Wonder, the erotic, the heroic
Wonder	The erotic, the heroic	Fury, disgust, fear, grief
Quietude[b]	Wonder	Fury, fear, disgust, grief, the erotic, the heroic.

a) Depression, despair, distraction, etc., which go into the tragic sentiment, appear in love-in-separation. But tragic grief itself is incongruous with its tone.

b) No emotion in its turbulent form can coexist with this mood.

TABLE II: SYNASTHESIS, OR THE MIXING OF DISCORDANT EMOTIONS

Based on the substratum	**Based on the object**	**Based on the moment of apprehension**
1. By placing the opposite emotions in different substrata, the opposition is removed, e.g., heroism in the protagonist and fear in the antagonist. 2. When two opposites are located in the same character, one is subordinated to the other: pity and rage in Othello.	By directing the opposite emotions on different objects.	1. Opposition between two emotions is removed by interposing a third, which is friendly to both. 2. By introducing intervening circumstances between the rise of the one and the rise of the other – circumstances that would warrant a change of attitude in the character towards an object.

TABLE III: WHAT HAPPENS WHEN OPPOSITES ARE COMBINED WITHOUT REGARD FOR PROPRIETY?

1. Love + disgust = disgust
   Love + fear = fear
   Love + rage = rage
   Love + pathos [grief] = pathos

2. Th e comic + pathos = comic
   The comic + fear = fear
   The comic + rage = rage

3. Pathos + rage = rage

4. Rage + wonder = rage
   Rage + fear = fear

5. The heroic + fear = fear
   The heroic +disgust = disgust

6. Fear + any other emotions, friendly or unfriendly = fear

7. Disgust + wonder = disgust

8. Wonder + pathos = pathos

9. Quietude + any other emotion would nullify that emotion

5.1.5 The Direct Perception of the *Rasa* Experience

The rules outlined above are simply broad principles set down by Sanskrit critics, but there may be different ways of handling the treatment of emotions and controlling the tone of the play. In any case, the prime concern of the dramatist should be to ensure that only one unified tone or emotion prevails throughout the play and that all other emotions and sub-emotions are subordinated to the principal mood (emotion), based on their natural affinities. "Aesthetic unity can be described only as the functional cooperation of all parts in the interests of a unified whole."[16]

The rules propounded by the *rasa* theorists are not merely arbitrary rules of composition; they have a psychological reasoning behind it. In a play dominated by diverse emotional strains, there is no place for two contradictory mental states. The nature of our mental apprehension is such that the quality of one moment is lost in the contemplation of a succeeding moment. So it is not possible for a variety of impressions that are qualitatively different to subsist simultaneously in a single moment of apprehension:

> The mixture of diverse emotional tones does not produce a new compound in which the ingredients preserve their distinctive flavour or an altogether new synthesis different from its ingredients. It is always the stronger element that asserts itself. Therefore, the concept of *rasa* requires that there be a single dominant emotion. It rules out the possibility of a '‘cocktail'’ of emotions in which the mixture produces a new compound relish.[17]

What Bharata stresses in both the generation and experience of *rasa* by the audience is the perceptibility or directness of its cognition. He, therefore, emphasizes the sensible form of *rasa* by describing it in terms of a gustatory image, *asvadana* or gustation. He writes:

> ….just as when various condiments and sauces and herbs and other materials are mixed, a taste (different from the individual tastes of the components) is felt, or when the mixing of materials like molasses with other materials produces six kinds of tastes, so also along with the different bhava-s(emotions) the Sthayi bhava becomes a 'taste'(rasa, flavour, feeling).But what is this thing called rasa? Here is the reply. Because it is enjoyably tasted, it is called rasa. How does the enjoyment come? Persons who eat prepared food mixed with different condiments and sauces, etc., if they are sensitive, enjoy the different tastes and then feel pleasure (or satisfaction); likewise, sensitive spectators, after enjoying the various emotions expressed by the actors through words, gestures and feelings feel pleasure, etc. This (final) feeling by the spectators is here explained as (various) rasa-s of natya [drama].[18]

Bharata's commentators also have recommended the perceptibility of the *rasa* experience. Sankuka (9th c. A.D) has distinguished between the linguistic function *(abhidhana*) and the theatrical performance. It is one thing to read the dramatic text as a form of poetry and another to witness its theatrical performance. He states that:

> Acting (abhinaya) is itself a communication (avagamana). It differs from the denotative function of language (vacake, abhidhana)….[What is communicated by acting is] not that (i) the actor is happy, (ii) the actor is Rama (identified with the character of the drama), (iii) the actor Rama is unhappy, (iv) the actor may or may not be Rama, (v) the actor is similar to Rama; but other than any illusion, doubt and resemblance – like a picture horse – [acting communicates] that this is that happy Rama.[19]

Thus, according to Sankuka, communication by acting differs from verbal communication. There is a great deal of difference between a reader's reading the dramatic dialogue and an actor's performing or even reading the same. When the actor reads, for example, a dialogue from Sriharsha's drama *Ratnavali*, "This multitude of droplets, fine rains of tears falling while she painted, produces on my body the effect of a perspiration borne from the touch of her hand," he performs as if his body is sweating with a sense of thrill.[20] A similar example could be taken from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* referring to the famous soliloquy, "To be, or not to be, that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer the slings and arrows of ourageous fortune, or to take arms

against a sea of troubles and, by opposing, end them." (III i: 58-62) where only an actor can bring out the full intensity of these words, pregnant with meaning. In any narrative form of literature the reader has to imagine and visualise the whole presentation mentally. But even the best form of visualisation by the most competent person cannot match the completeness of the performance of a dramatic text. Therefore to witness a dramatic text in its performance and to read dramatic texts are altogether two different experiences, the latter being always inferior to the former. So, acting as a whole, including its four constituents (pages 84-87) is a powerful tool of communicating emotions far more effective than any communication by reading.

Abhinavagupta, the noted commentator on Bharata also acknowledges the perceptibility of *rasa* and admits the superiority of the perceptual experience to all other experiences. It is obvious that Abhinavagupta, too, is aware of the truth that in poetry the reader does not enjoy the perceptual experience as the spectators in the theatre do. Thus he writes:

> Although the generalization can occur in mere tales (*katha*), nevertheless there lacking a great impressive feeling (*ranjana*), as in the case of the sentence, 'Such and such a thing happens to them who do such and such a thing,' the corresponding state of mind is not well decided. In poetry, on the contrary (and let us remember here that the body of poetry is made up of words embellished by qualities and figures of speech, with Rasa as its life, the Rasa of a non-ordinary nature) every state of mind is, so to say, completely immerged, thanks to a consent of heart. This idea, to be confronted with a kind of direct perception or experience (*pratyaksasaksatkarakalpa*) does not arise, however, in every person [who is hearing or reading a poem]. In drama this difficulty does not arise….The relish of suitable vocal and instrumental music makes then the spectator forget about his practical existence (*samsarikabhava*), and, his heart consequently being turned as clear as a spotless mirror he becomes capable of identifying himself with the mental states of sorrow, delight, etc., sprung from the sight of the gestures and of the other species of representation. Listening to the reciation makes the spectator enter into the life of a character different from himself, and, as a result there grows up in him a cognition whose object is Rama, Ravana and so on…. The spectator is accompanied by the impressions of this cognition… for

> several days. These impressions are evidenced, in their turn, by other ones, deposited within him by the direct perception of the various pleasure-producing things—women, vocal and instrumental musics—which accompanied the performance….[21]

The point that is repeatedly emphasized is the direct perception of the *rasa* experience. It is the general consensus that the audience experiences the theatre directly and *rasa* experience in theatre is necessarily one of direct perception. Since this kind of diect perception is not available in other forms of art, eminent Sanskrit critics are unwilling to grant the *rasa* status to them.

This delimitation of *rasa* experience, no doubt elevates the theatre to the highest form of art according to Sanskrit critics. But it obviously and appropriately generates disappointments in the readers of poetry. To resolve this crisis – to explain the extraordinary delight in reading poetry, Anandavardhana (9th century A.D) explores the source of such delight in a specific potency of the verbal composition of poetry. His quest for the peculiar ontological status of poetry that is responsible for the reader's delight might be compared to the delight of the theatrical audience. He thinks that *rasa* is also generated in poetry, if not due to the perception of the *bibhava*, *anubhava*, and *vyabicaribhava* (pages 84-86) etc. that, is exclusively a prerogative of the theatre; there is a source in poetry, which produces an experience in the reader that might be called *rasa*. This source is the specific linguistic potency of the poetic language, which he calls *vyanjana*, and the semantic ontology due to this potency is called *dhvani*. He also adds that the meaning of the semantic ontology of poetry is experienced directly and not indirectly. At least on this point, theatre and poetry are at par with each other, both of them being directly perceived.

The metaphysical concept of *dhvani*, which is described in the following section, will make it amply clear that the linguistic potency of poetry and other forms of literature is of such specific character that it is equally successful in generating *rasa* as the theatrical experience. While *rasa* is generated in theatre through the four constituents of drama, *vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhicaribhava* and its *samyoga* (pages 84-87); the same is generated in literature through a specific potency of language.

5.2 The Theory of *Dhvani*

Anandavardhana's formulation of the *Rasa-Dhvani* theory enjoys the advantage of a rich philosophical tradition. He draws primarily upon the philosophy of language advanced by Bharatrhari (7th century A.D.), who was a philosopher of great learning and perception. A member of the Paninian school (followers of Panini,[vii] a noted ancient linguist) and an ardent follower of Patanjali (2nd century B.C.), Bhartrhari also extrapolates philosophical doctrines from Tantric mysticism. In his exploration of the three levels of language such as *pasyanti*, *madhyama* and *vaikhari* (which will be explained in the following pages) lies his great insight of viewing language as the Supreme Reality. Following him Anandhavardhana also formulated three potencies of language *vyanjana*, *lakshana* and *avidha* respectively. Bhartrhari discarded the representational theory of language advocated by Wittgenstein,[viii] which has been the

[vii] Panini is supposed to have lived somewhere between 400 and 800 B.C. He was a Sanskrit grammarian who gave a comprehensive and scientific theory of phonetics, phonology and morphology. A treatise called *Astadhyayi* is his major work where he distinguishes between the language of sacred texts and the language of communication. He gives formal production rules and definitions to describe Sanskrit grammar. On the basis of circa 4000 *sutras* or rules expressed as aphorisms this great genius is supposed to have virtually built the whole structure of the Sanskrit language.
[viii] See Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) where he claims that language mirrors reality and the world. According to this view, language is a form of representation or *Bild*.

table talk of modern Western philosophers. Instead Bhartrhari propounded a theory of language, which might be called a theory of Revelation; language reveals reality and does not represent it. In the *Pasyanti* level language attains the status of the Absolute Reality, which is an object of indeterminate experience. Following him, Anandavardhana observed that in the *vyanjana* level, language also attains the status of Absolute Reality, which is pure consciousness, being the very soul of language in general and of poetry in particular. At this level an emotion is generalized in as much as it is freed from all individual affliations and attains the status of absolute (pure) consciousness, which is otherwise called *rasa*. In what follows I have attempted at providing a brief account of the *dhvani* theory.

The main literary theories that developed during the 7th and 8th centuries considered different figures of speech (*calamari*) and styles of linguistic expression (*riti*) as prevalent in the five different regions of ancient India, as the essential characteristics of poetry. But during the later part of the 9th century, thinkers started questioning the phenomenon from altogether a different perspective. They observed that poetry is not merely figures of speech or linguistic styles, but had something more to it. Gradually the question that came up was -- what is the soul or *atman* of poetry? Language with its literal or metaphorical meanings and the different styles of expression was considered to form the body of poetry, but not its soul or essence. The soul of poetry can be defined as a meaning, which transcends the two meanings denotional (primary) and metaphorical (secondary) while dwelling in these two. It is this tertiary or transcendental meaning (*dhvani*) which reveals or manifests itself not to any or every addressee but only to a qualified one who has the necessary sensibility and training that exceed any ordinary

linguistic competence, as the experience of soul or charm requires distinguished ability. But what kind of entity is this meaning which is the reality of poetry?

To provide an answer to this query, we need to go back to the yoga metaphysics and psychology of Patanjali (2nd century. B.C.) and his commentator Vyasa (4th century A.D.) in association with the dualistic metaphysics of *Sankhya* as expounded in the *Mahabharata* (2nd century B.C.?) and Isvarakrsna's *Sankhyakarika* (2nd century A.D.). The *Sankhya-Yoga* metaphysics presupposes the independent realities of two principles – *Purusa* and *Prakrti*, the stuff of the former being pure consciousness and that of the latter being matter. Further, there are three constituents of matter, which always coexist like three strands of a rope. They are intelligence-stuff (*sattva*), energy-stuff (*rajas*) and mass-stuff (*tamas*). The proximity of these two ultimate principles brings about creation and their separation brings about dissolution. During creation, *Purusa* (pure consciousness) and *Prakrti* are united and operative whereas during dissolution, the two remain dormant and disunited. Creation is a multifaceted transformation of these three constituents of *Prakrti* – a process that is due to the disturbance in the equilibrium of *Prakrti*; the disturbance being caused by its proximity with *Purusa*. *Prakrti* is unconscious, but it is like a prism on which the consciousness of *Purusa* is reflected and this reflection infuses, as it were consciousness into the matter-stuff of *Prakrti*. As a result, the three constituents start their evolutionary function. This proximity and separation form an eternal cycle of creation and dissolution.

Since the basic stuff of *Prakrti*, the very locus of creation is matter, the entire world is basically material, and its conscious element being a reflection of *Purusa* is only a superimposition, not the real one. There are two lines in the course of *Prakrti's*

evolution (1) the preponderance of the intelligence-constituent in association with the energy-constituent forms the subjective line of mind (*manas*), intellect (*buddhi*), the individual ego (*ahamkara*) and the five cognitive senses, (2) whereas the preponderance of mass-constituent in association with the energy constituent forms the objective line of five subtle elements, five gross elements and five motor senses. The Yoga system counts the three subjective evolutes of *Prakrti*--mind, intellect and ego under a single term *citta* and states that it has five functions (*vrttis*), which are:

(1) valid cognition by three means such as perception, inference and testimony;

(2) cognitive errors like illusion and hallucination;

(3) linguistic cognition of the non-existent such as the horns of a hare or the son of a barren woman;

(4) sleep, both sound and disturbed; and

(5) memory that refers not only to the impressions of the past and present, but also to the root impressions (*samskaras*) and the tastes, instincts, passions and habits (*vasanas*) of all the past lives. All our emotions such as love, laughter, sorrow, anger, courage, fear, hatred and wonder fall under this last function or state of *citta* (let us call it mind for our convenience).

Both the *Sankhya* and *Yoga* systems agree that the creation of the material world (*Prakrti*) is the cause of human misery, because these individual souls, afflicted by ignorance (owing to their material locus), fail to realize that their multiplicity is only a reflection, whereas in reality they are one with the ultimate principle of consciousness

(Purusa). While the *Sankhya* philosophy prescribes regular contemplation of the twenty five principles (*tattvas*), for this realization, the *Yoga* system recommends certain methods of systematic practices, basically being the control of the five mental states as mentioned above. It maintains that these states are of two types afflicted by ignorance (*klista*) and unafflicted by ignorance (*aklista*).[22] Our ignorance is caused by our awareness of the individual consciousness (*asmita*) leading to an afflicted mental state. It is therefore necessary to exercise our willpower (*abhinivesa*) to rid our mental states of this individual association. Gradually our habit patterns (*vasana*) will be purified until finally our identification with the pure consciousness (*caitanya*) will dawn.

The Yogic practice introduces a means for such identification with our pure conscious being, which is God or *Isvara* (the *Sankhya* philosophy does not accept this concept of God). *Isvara* is not the creator of *Prakrti* but an element of it. "As such although he is a creation or part of *Prakrti,* he is the best and highest of all the beings of *Prakrti* so much so that he is said to be the best representation of the ultimate *Purusa* who is consciousness in its purest form and is devoid of all the three constituents of *Prakrti* (*gunas*)."[23] The difference between *Isvara* and the other souls (both of them are creations of *Prakrti*) is succinctly described in the *Bhagavad Geeta* where Arjuna (who is one of the many souls) is distinguished from Krishna (who is *Isvara*).[24] Isvara may assume a physical form like any other soul. His mental states are completely unafflicted because of the predominance of *sattva* (intelligence stuff) and by his purest intelligence, he is omniscient, knows the past, present and future. But the mental states of the other ordinary souls are completely afflicted by the predominance of *rajas* and *tamas*, which make them incapable of controlling their births and deaths because of their ignorance of their real

being of consciousness. As he is never afflicted by any bondage of action, the only purpose of his existence is to grace the other souls by communicating to them that they are also of his own nature i.e. consciousness and not matter, and they can also reach this level by purifying their minds (*citta*) and freeing them from the predominance of *rajas* and *tamas* (page 109). Though *Isvara* is a being of *Prakrti*, it has no control over him; rather he controls it in exercising his free will. "He has no bondage of *Samskara*, no attachment to any *vasana*."[25]

The role of *Isvara* is extremely significant in understanding the nature of communication in Sanskrit critical theory. The fundamental questions that arise, are: (i) What is the subject matter of this communication? (ii) How is it communicated? (iii) What is the medium of this communication? (iv) What sort of experience is communication?

Isvara communicates the highest knowledge that Truth is pure consciousness; this consciousness means Absolute Bliss freeing oneself from all worldly miseries. He (*Isvara*) does not communicate this knowledge to all the afflicted souls, but only to a few qualified recipients who are capable of understanding and absorbing this divine knowledge. Their qualifications also include cultivation of the intelligence constituent of Nature (*sattva guna*) and the gift of grace and compassion of *Isvara*. This knowledge of the Truth is communicated to them by way of 'visualisation' (it is a knowledge that can be compared to direct visual perception). The recipients are, therefore called seers or *risis*. However, since this knowledge is conveyed to them in the form of scriptures, the nature of this communication should have been termed after auditory perception (the scriptures are supposed to have been communicated to the *risis* through a verbal

medium). The reason for comparing this communication to visual perception is that it is a synaesthetic experience. The verbal cognition concerned is compared to the revelation of objects in a dark room by a lamp. It is an instant flash (*pratibhava*). The point is that the language medium, which *Isvara* uses, is not opaque or conventional where the signified is different from the signifier. Since consciousness reveals itself (by its self-revealing or self-expressing power), the language of this revelation is a transparent glass, which identifies the signifier with the signified, and the addresser with the addressee. The lamp is here self-lit and the object revealed is nothing other than the light itself.[26]

By this communication the qualified souls can expel their worldly sufferings caused by their previous determinate knowledge. Finally, they touch Reality, the indeterminate knowledge that there is only one soul, one *Purusa*, the Truth, the consciousness that they are themselves. This is the state of *nirvija samadhi* or the state of the highest seedless bearing.[27]

Verbal communication in its highest stage is then an indeterminate experience desired by all truth-seekers. Similarly, verbal function in its highest is not signification, but revelation by which only the absolute truth can be communicated and this function therefore, is the paradigm towards which all language aspires. Taking this account *Mimamsa* (Vedic Exegesis) critics and the grammarians have divided language into three categories or levels. *Mimamsa* observes that language is a natural phenomenon and except for proper names, all words have natural semantic potency i.e. the relation between the signifier and the signified is not arbitrary or conventional, but natural. Words are constituted by letters and do not have any meaning on their own. Sentences, which are formed by words, are means of knowledge (not perceptual) and are of two kinds, human

and divine (Vedic). The former is a means of knowledge only if it is uttered by trustworthy men like sages and other authorities and the latter is valid in itself, unquestionable on any point. The purpose of *Mimamsa* is to prescribe the rules for discerning the meaning of the Vedic sentences in order to prove their self-validity. The philosophy of language and linguistic communication propounded by the grammarians is based on the *Sankhya-Yoga* metaphysics and Patanjali's commentary on Panini's grammatical aphorisms (see footnote on page 107).

Patanjali holds that each term becomes a word provided it has a meaning. In other words, when it is uttered by the agency of sound (*dhvani*), it reveals an object of the natural world. All the words are meaningful although any addressee or listener may not necessarily apprehend their meanings. According to Patanjali, language is a psychophysical phenomenon. It has two aspects, (i) the permanent sound pattern of a word which is called *sphota* and (ii) its revelation by a series of sounds called *dhvanis*. The former is a mental state and the latter a physical act. Irrespective of the differences of the sounds uttered by different individuals, the sound patterns remain the same and therefore communication is possible. While uttering the sounds, the letters are obviously separated physically, but their unity is maintained in the minds of both speaker and listener. Patanjali, the grammarian who also propounded the *yoga* philosophy maintained that language in its *sphota* aspect is essentially a mental state (*citta vrtti*) and it naturally follows that it is afflicted or unafflicted. In its former form it reveals this phenomenal world or *Prakrti* and in its latter form which is used by *Isvara*, it reveals the Reality which is Pure Consciousness and it is the very form that is used by *Isvara* for communicating or revealing the Truth or Pure Conciousness through scriptures. The

Yoga-*Vyakarana* (grammar) system of Patanjali therefore admits of two levels of language and communication; the natural that communicates the objects and events of the world of phenomenal pluralities or the manifested *Prakrti* and the divine that communicates through scriptures (Vedas). The latter level is the paradigm of the former.

The grammarian (next to Patanjali) who brought significant modifications in the theories of language and communication is Bhartrhari (7th century A.D.) He was basically a follower of Patanjali and a *Sankhya* metaphysician and believed in the *Sankhya* theory of causality i.e. the effect is a modification or transformation (*parinama*) of the cause and therefore the cause persists in the effect (*satkayavada*) so that from the nature of the effect we can deduce the nature of the cause. The *Sankhya* philosophers believed in the dualism of consciousness and matter because they observed that this world is constituted by these two elements. Bhartrhari experienced that since our knowledge of the world we live in-- the world which is the manifest form of *Prakrti*, is purely linguistic, or in other words, the truth about the behaviour of objects of this world is manifested by words or language, its cause must be also of this linguistic character.[28] The idea may be interpreted as an ontological relativism, which claims that what and how we perceive the world is determined for us by the overt and covert structures of our language. Bharthari's language being Sanskrit, he then determines the structure of the world in terms of the structure of the Sanskrit language. Or more appropriately, the structure of Sanskrit language explains the structure of the world. But his ontology is not restricted to the relativism of natural language. Following the principles of *Sankhya* metaphysics, he observes that since the evolution of Nature (*Prakrti*) is due to the reflection of *Purusa*, the ultimate principle of consciousness, the basic linguistic structure should be traced in

this ultimate principle. Following the lines of Upanishadic terminology, Bharthari names the *Sankhya Purusa* or *Brahman* and attributes two other Upanishadic characteristics of *Brahman* to this *Purusa*. They are pure existence (*sat*) and pure bliss (*ananda*) along with pure consciousness (*cit*). He further attributes another Upanishadic trait, the linguistic character (*sabda*) to this ultimate Reality. The method of his procedure from the phenomenal to the transcendental being set, he now formulates three levels of language, purely physical or ordinary (*vaikhari*), purely transcendental (*pasyanti*), and the mediation between the two (*madhyama*), the hierarchy of these levels being *pasyanti*, *madhyama* and *vaikhari*.

Vaikhari is the level of our natural or phenomenal language where the words (*sabda*) are separated from their meanings (*artha*) and grammar is relevant on this level since it aims at directing the correct use of words. Bhartrhari maintains that by learning the correct use of the words in the *vaikhari* level, one will attain knowledge of this phenomenal world and the wisdom of the Vedas and other scriptures, including the ones communicated by *Isvara* to the worthy recipients like sages or poets, which will lead him to the *pasyanti* level of language where *sabda* and *artha* are identified. It is the level of Pure Consciousness or pre-experienced consciousness, the object of this consciousness (*artha*) being only itself. This is the state of *sabdapurvayoga* or the summum bonum of human beings that is variously termed by several other Indian systems of thought, such as *mukti*, *moksha*, *kaivalya* and *nirvija samadhi*. It is in fact, an elevation from the discursive mode of linguistic existence as also an elevation from the afflicted consciousness to the unafflicted consciousness.

Bharthari explains the *vaikhari* level of linguistic experience as an object of ignorance (*avidya*). Though he accepts the reality of the *vaikhari* level of language he repeatedly warns that in the *vaikhari* level, the word, its objects or meaning and their cognition are all tainted with impurity since they are all the constructs of three elements or constituents of *sattva* (intelligence), *rajas* (energy), and *tamas* (mass) which have a corrupting influence on the Pure Consciousness. Bharthari systematically elaborates the structure of language in terms of the structure of the constructs of these three constituents. Evolution being an event or action, verb or action in a sentence is the major phenomenon in Sanskrit grammar. Evolution (*vivarta*) involves two kinds of phenomena *siddha* or the accomplished and *sadhya* or the process of accomplishment. The first group of phenomena is arranged in a spatial sequence (occupying space) and is called *Murti vivarta* (nouns including subjects and objects), while the second group is arranged in a temporal sequence the process and actions of which accomplishment is called *Kriyavivarta*. Ultimately these two are the basic potencies (*sakti*) of *Sabda Brahman* or consciousness, space potency and time potency operating through the three constituents of *Prakrti*. Skillfully enough, the items in Sanskrit grammar such as gender, number, person and case etc. are all interpreted in terms of the combination of the three constituents along the general scheme of *Sankhya* evolution with the preponderance of any one of the constituents in each construct. The grammatical structure therefore perfectly matches the phenomenal structure in the *vaikhari* or ordinary language level. The basic function of language in all the three levels is revelation, not representation or correspondence, after the analogy of a lamp lighting the objects already existing. *Vaikhari* reveals the objects of both *siddha* and *sadhya* groups of phenomena. *Madhyama*

reveals the mental concepts including dream objects and metaphorical cognition, and *pasyanti* reveals the Truth, the ultimate Reality that is Pure Consciousness. It is a self-revelation.

The three levels of language are also interpreted as the three stages in the process of the utterance of *vaikhari*. The first stage is the intrinsic form of speech where *sattva* (intelligence) predominates, the second stage indicates the dynamism of the process that is predominated by *rajas* (energy) and finally the third one is the physical sound predominated by *tamas* (mass) and therefore, much more limited in its revealing capacity compared to the previous two. It reveals the objects of Nature. Bharthari names these three stages as *sphota*, *prakrta dhvani* and *vaikrta dhvani* and in doing so he slightly modifies Patanjali's concepts of *sphota* and *dhvani*. *Sphota*, for Bharthari, is not merely a permanent sound pattern, it is a transcendental entity, over and above the sounds taken either individually or collectively, which bears the meaning primarily of the sentences and secondarily of the words. This modification promotes Bharthari's ideas to an organized system of metaphysics of language as well as of general linguistics.

Coming back to the question of the soul or ontology of poetry Anandavardhana provides an answer that *dhvani* is the soul (*atman*) of poetry. Not being the first critic to explore this soul he elaborates on this concept, already explored by the critical tradition of India. The term is attributed a new concept connecting a kind of meaning called *pratiyamana artha* which is due to a specific potency called *vyanjana*. The word is derived from the root *vyaj* from which the word *abhivyakti* (revelation) is derived and is used to explain the function of language in general in the systems of *Sankhya yoga*, *Mimamsa* and grammar. *Vyanjana* and *abhivyakti* being synonymous, it is now a question

how the former connotes a specific semantic potency, which is different from the latter and again, what is this *pratiyamana artha*, a specific kind of meaning that arises from this specific potency? The exact meaning of *pratiyamana artha* is "being known," that the act of knowing is in the process and is not yet completed. It is different from *pratita* meaning "already known." As the situation stands, it is difficult to understand the proposition that the soul of poetry is a kind of meaning that is not known already, but is in the process of knowing.

One explanation of such difference may be given by borrowing an insight from Bharthari's doctrine of tense. According to him our knowledge of the present is pre-dominated by *sattva* (intelligence) and that of both past and future by *tamas* (mass), *rajas* being the very foundation of verb as the principle of energy (*kriya*). The present is always an illumination representing the quality of *sattva*, unlike the past and the future that are not immediately before us and hence unilluminated. That which is immediately present before us is the object of our indeterminate perception and that which is already known is determinate. Determinacy delimits the scope of our experience of the particular and it refers to our experience of the manifest *Prakrti*, the world of *siddha* and *sadhya* that is determined by time and space, two potencies of the ultimate consciousness or Reality or the primordial word *Sabda Brahman*. This world confined to time and space is experienced through the operation of *vaikhari* or ordinary language. Therefore the revelation or *abhivyakti* of *vaikhari* language is an act of determinacy. When the word jar is uttered (*vaikyta dhvani*) the object jar is revealed and, since this jar is an object of the material world of *Prakrti* and is therefore limited by time and space, its linguistic or cognitive experience does not continue indeterminately. Its apprehension is completed at

once. In other words, *vaikhari* apprehension of the material world of *Prakrti* is of the *pratita* (already known) type. The same applies to the *madhyama* experience. But the *pasyanti* level of experience is completely different. At this level of experience, language and its meaning and the subject and object of experience being the same eternal, unending consciousness, the experience is of the *pratiyamana* (being known) type. Since the apprehension of the eternal consciousness is itself eternally a continuous process and since consciousness is self-luminous and is not delimited by time and space, there are no events and objects needing determinate knowledge. Knowledge of *pasyanti* is therefore indeterminate, an experience of continuous present. Scriptural communication of *Isvara* and its reception by sages and poets are indeterminate apprehension of this experience of eternal consciousness. *Pasyanti* experience or *pratiyamana* meaning is therefore liberation from the bondage of the worlds of both *vaikhari* and *madhyama*, from the bondage of the univocality of language. Reality is experienced by the *pasyanti* language, which is the potency of *Isvara* through which he communicates this experience to the sages and poets who are predominated by *sattva*, as is also *Isvara.*[ix]

Thus poetry is an experience of truth, which is pure consciousness. This experience, indeterminate in character, is revealed to the poet in the *pasyanti* level of language. But paradoxically, the poet has to reveal this experience in the *vaikhari* or ordinary language level, which is for practical reasons purely referential and discursive in separating language (as words and sentences) from its meaning, or in other words, the physical sounds (*vaikrta dhvani*) from the objects (*artha*: images, events and facts) they refer to. Anandavardhana founded this argument upon the relation of physical sound,

[ix] Vasugupta, a contemporary of Anandavardhana, has modified this dualism of *Sankhya-yoga* by significant contributions, but it is not necessary to elaborate further.

(*vaikrta dhvani*) and the transcendental entity of language (*sphota*) as propounded by Bharthari; if the transcendental entity of language, the eternal, imperishable *sphota*, can be revealed by the perishable physical sound, then in a similar way *vaikhari* language can reveal the eternal consciousness. Therefore in its semantic extension, the word *dhvani* or physical sound means (i) the phenomenon sounded or revealed i.e. Truth or Pure Consciousness, (ii) that which sounds or reveals i.e. *vaikhari* language in the form of physical sounds and (iii) the act of sounding or revealing i.e. the specific semantic potency in its operation -- *vyanjana*. There obviously lies a difference between the relation of *sphota* and *vaikrta dhvani* in grammar, and that of consciousness of Truth and the *vaikhari* language in poetics; in the former case this relation is regular and in the latter case the relation is irregular. Only in some cases the *vaikhari* language reveals Truth and this is where this language is promoted to poetry.

What needs to be discussed now is what exactly happens in poetic communication and how Truth is communicated through ordinary (*vaikhari*) language. Anandavardhana cites an example of the event that was responsible for revealing the epic *Ramayana* to the supposedly first poet-sage Valmiki (2^{nd} century B.C). One day when the sage was moving in the garden of his hermitage he spied a hunter shooting down a male crane engaged in copulation. This incident along with the agonized shrieks of the female bird caused the sage to curse the hunter for his insensitivity and for being unable to comprehend the misery of the love-struck bird. The epic *Ramayana* begins with the following curse: “O hunter, may you never find peace for everlasting years since you killed one of the mating pair of cranes.” The sorrow of the sage is not caused by any selfish attachment since he is not personally affected by the death of the male crane. It is due to his selfless sympathy

(*sahrdayata*) and it is in such cases that the emotions as mental states attain the status of Pure Consciousness, as they are not afflicted by personal attachment caused by *avidya* (ignorance). Poetry, in other words, conveys this pure consciousness in the form of unafflicted mental states or emotions. Therefore the *dhvani* experience in poetry is basically the experience of this unafflicted mental state, which is otherwise called *rasa* or *rasa-dhvani*. *Rasa* is that which is derived through the visual perception in the theatre including its four constituents--*vibhava*, *anubhava*, *vyabhicaribhava* and its *samyoga* (pages 84-87). In poetry, since the visual perception is missing, one experiences the same *rasa* through *dhvani* (*rasa-dhvani*), the latter becoming a means of attaining the former. It is through this *dhvani* experience that language becomes elevated to poetry. So in this sense even a play can become poetry for its reader (not a theatre-goer).

Another example of a *dhvani* description in Sanskrit poetry can be cited. One such is from Kalidasa's *Birth of Kumara*, where Parvati, the daughter of the Himalayas, loves lord Shiva. When sage Angira brings a formal marriage proposal, Parvati, who is standing nearby lowers her face and begins counting the petals of the lotus she has been holding in a playful gesture. Anandavardhana states that this simple gesture of Parvati is a *dhvani* description. It flashes her love for lord Shiva and her eagerness to marry him. The *dhvani* discourse is peculiarly different from other discourses in so far as it exemplifies the indeterminacy of human experience of consciousness and its inexpressibility in ordinary discourse. A woman's love, for instance, in a practical context can be stated as "she loves him." But in the world of poetry where emotions are unafflicted as they have no practical attachment with any character of a poem or with the poet, they cannot be communicated exhaustively by any statement like "she loves him" or even by its

contrary. Since in its unafflicted state, the experience of love is indeterminate, the language that communicates it must also be indecisive. Depending on various factors like the character, cultural context, convention, environment and the addressee, the discourse might vary unendingly. Although Valmiki's curse was the immediate *dhvani* expression of his sorrow, his emotion did not exhaust only with that curse. The entire *Ramayana* epic is fact the *dhvani* expression of his sorrow.

Anandavardhana has classified *dhvani* into different categories but this classification does not exhaust all the possible categories. The possibility of various other categories in future poetry is certainly not precluded.

5.2.1 Types of *Dhvani*

Dhvani has been broadly classified into four main kinds.

Pertaining

(1) to the embellishable (*Vastu-dhvani*)

(2) to the embellishment (*Alankara-dhvani*)

(3) to the transient emotion (*Bhava-dhvani*)

(4) to the aesthetic configuration (*Rasa-dhvani*) [29]

Vastu-dhvani is the revealing power, which operates to arouse the revealed meaning. This power (1) may arouse a negative meaning when the statement, in strict conventional language, is positive or vice versa. (2) It may give rise to a meaning, which is neither positive nor negative, when the statement is clearly positive or negative. (3) Or when the statement is meant not for the one, to whom it is addressed, but for the other, to

whom the situation, in which the person addressed is involved, has to be explained in order that the latter may spare the former; it may give rise to a meaning quite different from that which the statement has for the addressed.

Thus, depending on the situation, the skill of the speaker and the capacity of understanding and visualization of the hearer, this power of revealing gives rise to innumerable meanings. The constituents of the aesthetic configuration can be divided into two classes, the objective and the subjective. By the objective is meant those, which represent something that exists outside the mind. And by subjective is meant mental states. The objective is further divided into two kinds; if it stimulates an emotion or if it indicates any mental states by gestures or facial expressions. The former is called *vibhava* and the latter *anubhava*, both of which have been discussed previously (pages 84-85). A meaning that refers to what is objective of either kind is included in the *vastu dhvani*.

Alankara-dhvani is that linguistic power or capacity suggesting an idea, which is a poetic embellishment (*alankara*).

Bhava-dhvani – The subjective constituents of the aesthetic configuration, the mental states, are divided into two classes, the basic mental states or durable emotions and the transient emotions, which have been discussed in this chapter (pages 90-94). Accordingly, we have *bhava dhvani* when the idea suggested is a transient emotion.

Rasa-dhvani is considered to be the ultimate in poetic communication and is that revealing power which floods the mind with a host of ideas, not always clearly definable but necessary for the completion of an aesthetic image. It is also necessary for revealing the basic mental state at a high pitch and for bringing about complete self-forgetfulness in the hearer or reader.

What has been attempted is simply a broad classification of the concept of *dhvani*. *Dhvani* can be further divided and sub-divided into different categories. In fact according to Abhinavagupta there are 9940 varieties of *dhvani* and according to Mamata. 10,455.[30] But such detailed categorisations are not relevant to our discussion.

6 A CLASSICAL INDIAN INTERPRETATION

HAMLET IN THE LIGHT OF THE BHAGAVAD GEETA, SANSKRIT DRAMATURGY AND POETICS

6.1 *Hamlet* and the *Bhagavad Geeta*

Among the innumerable spiritual treatises, *Srimad Bhagavad Geeta* (commonly known as the *Holy Geeta* or simply the *Geeta*) occupies a distinct status in Indian society. A philosophic handbook of practical living, the *Bhagavad Geeta* comprises eighteen chapters (from the 25th to the 42nd) of the great Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*. The two legendary epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* hold a special position in the heart of an average Indian. While a very small percentage of Indians may have a thorough knowledge of the these two epics in their entirety, the general population is undoubtedly well acquainted with the basic outline of the stories, the various plots and sub-plots, and the morality and ethics they purport. Falling within the fold of the *Mahabharata*, *Srimad Bhagavad Geeta* finds direct access into the mind of an average Indian. Though other ancient scriptures and spiritual treatises like the *Vedas*, *Upanishads*, *Shastras*, *Puranas* etc. form the rudiment of Indian society and are considered equally sacred, modern Indians relate to them with an apparent disconnectedness, bowing to them as a part of their heritage and of a glorious, but remote past. While the study, understanding and interpretation of these scriptures are left to a handful of scholars, the *Bhagavad Geeta* is a living symbol of edification continuing to survive through the ages. It contains an understandable metaphysical concept of God, backed by an iconic presentation. And what

endears it more to Indians is the perenniality of the *Geeta* philosophy combined with its clarity of expression in expounding lofty ideals and unfolding core truths of life. The *Geeta* is the single Indian *dharmagrantha* (religious scripture), which has the largest number of scholarly explications in English and the Indian languages. In religious meetings or congregations the *Geeta* is the most frequently discussed document. In view of this, I believe that no Indian interpretation would be complete without any reference to the *Bhagavad Geeta*. So, before moving on to pure dramaturgy, I deem it correct to devote a short section of my thesis to a *Geeta* interpretation of *Hamlet*.

This inevitably leads us back to the general background of the *Mahabharata* epic. This vast composition has invited a lot of speculation regarding its date and authorship. However, what is for certain is that, the first version was composed no later than 1500 B.C and its authorship may be attributed to sage Vyasa. At other unspecified times, additions were made by different narrators until about A.D. 400, when the epic came to its present length of one hundred thousand stanzas making it the longest composition in the world.

The apocryphal *Mahabharata* story takes up the original saga of the struggle between the Pandavas and the Kauravas and weaves around it a mass of legendary lore and tradition as well as ethical and philosophical material. The main heroes of the epic are the five virtuous Pandava princes and their rival cousins, the Kaurava princes, who were a hundred in number. Cheated in a decisive game of dice, the Pandavas lose their kingdom and are banished to the forest for thirteen years. When Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava prince does not keep his promise of restoring the Pandavas their share of the kingdom at the end of their exile, the great battle of the *Mahabharata* breaks out between

the two parties. At the commencement of the battle, Arjuna, the invincible Pandava hero loses his composure and his heart is wrenched in personal anguish at the sight of his beloved friends, comrades and revered elders standing on both sides. When he wishes to lay down his weapons in the battlefield, Lord Krishna who is acting as his charioteer confers upon him the highest of knowledge, commanding him to rise to the call of his duty and to destroy *adharma* or unrighteousness. This long spiritual discourse on life and conduct, called the Divine Song of the Lord, comprises the *Geeta* philosophy.

The Kauravas, hundred in number, represent the innumerable ungodly forces of negative tendencies within man's bosom, and the Pandavas represent the divine impulses in him which are seemingly less in number. A similar set up can be observed in *Hamlet* where Claudius, Gertrude, Polonius, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern, Osric etc. represent the evil forces and Hamlet and Horatio represent the nobler aspects of human nature. The *Geeta* would interpret the clash between Hamlet and Claudius as not merely one of personal enemity but as a conflict between two ideologies as the Pandavas and the Kauravas.[1] While Hamlet stands for moral purity and justice Claudius stands for covetousness and moral corruption[x] and it is Hamlet's duty as a *Kshatriya* (one belonging to the ruling and warrior class) to oppose evil and fight for a just cause. The *Geeta* declares "there is nothing higher for a *Kshatriya* than to fight a righteous war" (*Geeta* ii: 31). "To the leaders of people, there can be nothing nobler than to get a glorious chance to fight for a righteous cause."[2] Like the Pandava prince, Arjuna, Hamlet faces a similar

[x] This dichotomical division of vice and virtue where the characters are personifications of good and evil is also seen in medieval morality plays.The *Geeta* concept of a struggle between good and evil within each person is a fundamental Christan idea that forms the basis of the morality plays.

dilemma, although in a different context, culture and situation. Janaki Ram has analysed the dilemmas of Arjuna and Hamlet. Though motivated by different forces, both are reluctant to shed blood owing to their inner sensibility. However, in the case of Arjuna, the motivation has a philosophical backing and the *Mahabharata* is an openly declared war of wider consequences. Hamlet's war is a private undeclared war.[3] Arjuna, a warrior and a man of action suddenly becomes unwilling to take up arms against his own kith and kin when he comes to a full realisation of the tragedies of a fratricidal war. A picture of dejection, Arjuna puts forth a series of pacifist arguments against the terrible consequences of war. He discusses about unecessary bloodshed, the sin of killing one's own kinsmen, annihilation of cultural values, destruction of family units, moral decadence and the general evil that creeps into society—all of these resulting in a total chaos (*Geeta* v: 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42 & 43). In Arjuna's words one can detect "almost the world's first conscientious objector to war!" [4] He proudly declares that he would not slay his cousins and own kinsmen even for the sake of dominion over the three worlds, much less for Hastinapura (the kingdom of the Kauravas and the Pandavas). He says he doesn't want to commit the grave sin of killing his own blood relations for the pleasure of kingship and would rather die in their hands, unresisting and unarmed (*Geeta* i: 45 & 46). In his intense state of mental confusion he misconstrues the Pandavas' intentions for war as greed for wealth and power. However, Arjuna's apparent renunciation and magnanimity has been declared as a misnomer in the *Geeta*, which expounds the central idea of "active resistance to evil."[5] Arjuna's hapless condition is in reality, a result of his anxiety about the outcome of the battle. He urgently desired victory and glory. But suddenly feeling intimidated at the sight of the mighty Kaurava forces and some of its

great and eminent warriors he begins losing hope. Overcome by a feeling of desperation, he loses his mental equilibrium. Failing to understand his own emotions he interprets them differently and starts raving about peace and the futility of war. "In the human heart there is always a great tendency to glorify one's own weaknesses with some convenient angelic name and divine pose."[6] Hence, Arjuna tries to cover up his negative emotions of fear and despondency under the false guise of martyrdom and ethical goodness. His grief at the prospect of fighting with highly honoured men like Drona (his Guru) and Bhisma (his grand-uncle) stems from his egoism or the 'I' consciousness, latent in all of us. He vehemently argues:

> How,O Madhusudana,shall I, in battle,fight with arrows
> against Bhisma and Drona,who are fit to be worshipped,O destroyer of enemies!
>
> (*Geeta* ii: 4)
>
> Better indeed in this world to eat even the bread of 'beggary' than to slay the most noble of teachers. But, if I kill them, even in this world, all my enjoyments of wealth and desires will be stained with blood.
>
> (*Geeta* ii: 5)

This line of argument however convincing has been rejected in the *Geeta* doctrine. Here Arjuna commits the error of confining himself within the bounds of his individual ego and observing the situation from the same perspective. He misreads the problem as one of personal rivalry whereas the forthcoming war is a conflict between two principles. Arjuna recognizes himself to be the disciple of Drona and the grandnephew of Bhisma but they feel no such compunction, having transcended their personal ego for the cause they are championing. Hamlet being confronted with a similar situation should forsake his ego and fight for the cause of *dharma* (righteousness) as against *adharma* (unrighteousness). The following words of Hamlet are in conformity with the *Geeta* doctrine:

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pitch and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry
And lose the name of action.

(III i: 85-90)

The *Geeta* firmly advocates the 'Path of Action', which is a means to an end i.e. the 'Path of Knowledge,' when the mind becomes trained for the absorption and assimilation of the higher Truth.[7] All creatures come under Nature and it is the very nature of Nature that it always employs its creatures to perform action, whatever it may be, appropriate or inappropriate, virtuous or vicious. Therefore, a man unwilling to perform physical action will at times be forced by Nature to act. Arjuna's unwillingness to fight on the battlefield is considered by Krishna as an infatuation, not the right sort of judgement (*Geeta* ii: 2). Because Nature will compel him to do this action, it is better that he fights willingly, irrespective of success or failure, victory or defeat (*Geeta* ii: 47). So like Arjuna the *Geeta* would advise Hamlet to fight vigorously with the right attitude of mind, as running away from the duty enjoined on him would only lead him to moral dissipation.

According to this Holy Scripture, life means activity. Inactivity leads neither to progress nor to regress, rather to stagnancy. It is therefore periods of activity that create man. Ancient philosophers classify activity into two kinds—constructive and destructive. Constructive activities that contribute towards the evolution of the individual are termed as *karma* and can be sub-divided into three main kinds; *nitya*—constant duties, *naimittika*—special duties on special occasions and *kamya*--work purposeful and self-determined for winning a desirable result or reward.[8] Destructive activities are totally condemned in the ancient scriptures, as they tend to degenerate the individual and are called *vi-karma*. Lord Krishna in the *Geeta* completely rejects "inactivity" or *a-karma*

and says, “he who, sits restraining the organs of action is a man of deluded intellect or a hypocrite (*mithyacarya*)” (*Geeta* iii: 6). Like Arjuna, the *Geeta* is a call to Hamlet to resort to positive action or *karma* and cast away his gloom, which can only result in *a-karma* (inaction). The task assigned to both Arjuna and Hamlet falls under the specific category of *kamya* i.e. work purposeful and self-determined for winning a desirable result or reward. This is the highest kind of *karma*. Claudius’ vile deeds, on the other hand as also his sycophants are obviously destructive activities or *vi-karma*.

The *Bhagavad Geeta* says that the absolute or ultimate Reality is pure consciousness and bliss in nature that is changeless and beyond transformation. In its pure form it is beyond time and space, but it also recreates itself as it were in a playful state (*lila*) and this it does by assuming Nature (*Geeta* xv: 12 13 &16). The absolute Reality is self-illuminating and as such it is knowledge itself. In its playful desire it intends to recreate itself. Similarly, in case of human beings any action depends upon his desire to perfom this act. Again, his desire to perform this act depends upon his knowledge of the action. For example one cannot have a desire to write a book unless he has the knowledge of a book and of writing a book. Once he has this knowledge he might express the desire to write a book. So only the right knowledge can result in the right action. Knowledge can be of three types: the pure or good, the passionate and the dull. That knowledge by which one sees the one indestructible Reality in all beings, undivided in the divided, is known as *sattvic* or pure (*Geeta* xviii: 20). Though different living creatures have different forms the *sattvic* knowledge recognizes all of them as expressions of one and the same Truth, which is the essence in all of them. Just as a goldsmith recognizes the one metal gold in all ornaments and as we are aware of the

same cotton in all shirts, the *sattvic* mind sees the same changeless entity in all existence. But that knowledge which sees in all beings, entities of distinct kinds (and) as different from one another, is known to be *rajasic* (passionate) in nature (*Geeta* xviii: 21). This knowledge recognizes plurality and considers various entities as different from one another. The *rajasic* person is restless and perceives the world as an assortment of various living creatures and divides them into different classes—as the plant, animal and human kingdoms. It also distinguishes men and women of different races, nationalities, religion etc. The third type of knowledge which clings to one single effect, as if it were the whole, without reason, without foundation in truth, and narrow, is declared to be *tamasic* or dull (*Geeta* xviii: 22). This inferior knowledge is clouded in intellect and blocked with fixed ideas. It fails to see things as they are, projects its own ideas upon the world and views things all wrongly. The *tamasic* intellect sees the world as being meant for him and his pleasures only. Its vision is narrow, perverted and egocentric.

This three-fold division of knowledge corresponds to a three-fold division of action. An action which is ordained, which is free from attachment, which is done without love or hatred, by one who is not desirous of the fruit, that action is declared to be *sattvic* (pure) (*Geeta* xviii: 23). Such an action is performed in a spirit of inspiration and elevates an individual to seek higher spirituality. It is an activity free from any attachment and without any interest in enjoying the results thereof. It is an attitude that work itself is worship and that action itself is its fulfilment. This action remains steady and blissful. But that action which is done by one, longing for desires or gain, done with egoism, or with much effort, is declared to be *rajasic* or passionate (*Geeta* xviii: 24). A *rajasic* action involves heavy toil leading to mental and physical fatigue. These

individuals work with arrogant egos under heavy strain occupied with their own anxieties and fears if their goals will ever be reached. Such self-centred actions lead to high tension and can leave an individual completely exhausted and shattered. The other kind of action, which is undertaken from delusion, without regard for the consequence, loss, injury, and ability, is declared to be *tamasic* or dull (*Geeta* xviii: 25). These actions are performed without any consideration for the consequences thereof and without any regard for the damage caused to others. Such reckless actions undertaken because of some delusory misconception of the goal, fall under the *tamasic* type. It is the kind of action undertaken that determines the individual character of a person i.e. whether it is of the *sattvic*, *rajasic* or *tamasic* mode.

Claudius' and Gertrude's actions undoubtedly reflect their baser knowledge and belong to the *tamasic* (dull) type. Hamlet's knowlege like that of Arjuna will fall into the *rajasic* or passionate type. The knowledge they have gained in life does not belong to the purest kind (*sattvic*); their intellects are somewhat confused and restless. However Hamlet's actions are not guided by any personal greed or desire for achieving any personal end. He desires neither power nor kingship though he is the natural heir to his father's throne. He seeks Claudius' death only as a response to the Ghost's command and to avenge his father's murder. In this sense, Hamlet's actions border on the *sattvic* (pure) type of action. But he finds no joy in performing the duty assigned to him. It is his *rajasi*c (passionate) intellect, which stands in his way of accepting his duty with alacrity and performing it with the correct attitude and right frame of mind. Not being endowed with the clearest vision of the *sattvic* type, he acts under heavy strain, robbed of joy and ardour resulting in complete mental exhaustion. This is a *rajasi*c type of action. Arjuna, on the

other hand is highly fortunate to have a divine mentor at his side in the form of Lord Krishna to cleanse his egocentric mind and steer him to the path of *sattvic* (pure) vision and knowledge. This awakening in Arjuna prompted him to rise to action and take up arms against injustice resulting in the ultimate *sattvic* action.

6.2 *Hamlet* and the Dramatic Structure in Classical Sanskrit plays

Before entering into a comparative discussion of the structure of *Hamlet* with that of Sanskrit drama, I will briefly sketch the classical conventions of the Sanskrit dramatic structure. A classical Sanskrit play, or any play for that matter, is a representation of action. The different stages in the plot of each Sanskrit play hence presuppose a theory of action. The Sanskrit aestheticians hold that each action has five stages in its fruition (1) the motive or *arambha*, subjectively expressed as desire, in which all action begins; (2) the effort or *prayatna*, the first objectification of the motive; (3) the hope of attainment or *praptyasa*, which presumes a response in the objective world sustaining and furthering the effort; (4) the eventuation or *niyatapti* wherein the subjective and objective phases of the action are brought together, promising a certain outcome; (5) the attainment of the fruit or *phalaprapti* that is both the termination of hope and realization of the original motive. An action represented through these five stages corresponds to the five elements or components of a dramatic plot. These five components of the dramatic plot are called *Arthaprakrti* in Sanskrit. They are *Bija*, *Bindu*, *Pataka*, *Prakari* and *Karya*.[9] *Bija* means seed; *Bindu*, the starting point or germination; *Pataka* is the addition of subplots, *Prakari* is the expansion and *Karya* is the effect or result. In addition there are five junctures or *samdhis* in the plot each of which formulates

one of these moments of the main action. These can be described as the five critical meeting points or links between the different stages in the plot. They are (1) *mukha* or face; (2) *pratimukha* or reflection of the *mukha*; (3) garbha or womb; (4) *vimarsa* or reconsideration; (5) *nirvahana* or dénouement. These junctures may be interpreted as the five necessary sections of the main action.

A Sanskrit play is divided into several parts each of which is called an *Anka* or Act. It may or may not correspond with the five different stages or components of the dramatic plot. Each stage may run into several acts. An act may have a particular name and sometimes all the acts may have definite names as in Vishakadutta's (9^{th} century A.D.), *The Signet Ring of Rakshasa* (*Mudra-Rakshasa*), Bhavabhutti's (7th century. A.D.?) *The Later Story of Rama* (*Uttararamacharita*) and Harsha's (7th century A.D.) *Ratnavali*. An act should not have in its scope too many episodes and there should not be such episodes as stand in opposition to the main events. Only those diversions that relate in some way to the principal plot are admitted. A Sanskrit play may cover a period of several years but any given act normally includes events not exceeding one day. Locale however, may change as often as is required within a single act. So the unity of place is entirely disregarded in Sanskrit drama. The number of acts in a single play may vary between one and ten, but some plays called the *Mahanatakas* have acts numbering even fourteen.[10] An act sometimes contains a sub-act within itself but is not formally divided into scenes. However, the entrance of one person and the exit of another can indicate scenes. A benediction opens each play and generally, closes it.

Let us take the example of Kalidasa's famous play *Shakuntala* that might be cited as an illustration. The principal concern of the play is with the manifestation of *sringara*

rasa or the emotion of love (page 82). The play opens in the forest where king Dushyanta is out hunting. He accidentally comes across the hermitage of sage Kanva where he sees Shakuntala, the sages' foster daughter and her companions. Both of them fall in love with each other and get married secretly, without the consent of her father, during his absence. After spending a few days together, the king has to leave for the palace to resume his royal duties and promises to send for her soon.

Meanwhile sage Durvasa comes to visit sage Kanva's hermitage. Lost in deep thought of her husband, king Dushyanta, Shakuntala is unaware of the sage's approach and despite his repeated utterance of her name, does not wake up from her reverie. The sage feels offended at her disregard of an honoured guest and curses her that the person, who she is thinking of, should forget her. Her friend, Priyambada, hears the sages' curse and pleads with him to take it back. Durvasa says that it is impossible to take back a curse, but he can alter it a little. The person who forgets her will remember her again on setting eyes on something, which he had given her. Priyambada feels reassured as Shakuntala has the king's signet, which Dushyanta had given her.

After a few weeks of waiting, Shakuntala hears no news from Dushyanta. When her father Kanva returns from meditation, he makes preparations to send her to her husband's palace. On the way when she is drinking water from a lake, the ring slips off her finger, without her noticing it. On reaching the palace, the king doesn't recognize her and disclaims her as his wife. Durvasa's curse comes true. As a proof, the shocked Shakuntala tries to produce the ring he had given her, only to find it missing. Being disowned by the king, she cannot stay at the palace. The chief priest takes pity on the pregnant Shakuntala and asks her to stay at his hermitage till her child is born. However,

on their way to his hermitage, her mother, the heavenly nymph Menaka, carries Shakuntala away.

In the meantime a fisherman is caught who is supposed to have gotten hold of the king's signet. The fisherman claims innocence saying he found the ring in the stomach of a fish. On seeing the ring, the king immediately remembers Shakuntala and is full of remorse at having treated her so cruelly. He starts looking for her but finds no trace of her whereabouts. Unable to find her, the king is plunged in sorrow at the loss of his beloved. Several years pass by in this manner.

Meanwhile the gods and the demons wage a war against each other. King Dushyanta is requested to help the gods and with his bravery and skill he wins the battle for them. Indra, the king of the gods promises to reward him for his bravery. Dushyanta is supposed to return home in a flying chariot owned by the gods, but the charioteer drops him off in a strange land. Dushyanta wanders around and comes across a little boy who is playing with a lion cub. Impressed by his courage, Dushyanta approaches the boy. During his tussle with the lion cub, the boy's amulet falls off. Before the nursemaid could prevent him, Dushyanta picks up the amulet. Astonished, the woman exclaims that he is the father of the boy, Bharata. She explains that the magic amulet given by sage Maricha was supposed to protect Bharata. If anyone else other than the parents touched it, it would turn into a snake and bite the person. Since this didn't happen, Bharata must be his son. The boy takes king Dushyanta to his mother Shakuntala and both are overjoyed to see each other. Sage Maricha, under whose care Shakuntala was staying, explains to them about Durvasa's curse. Being thus reunited, the three of them return to king Dushyanta's palace and live happily everafter. The play can be analysed thus, in the following way:

(1) The king happens on Shakuntala and conceives a passion for her, which is considered rightful from the beginning, conforming to social laws of the time. Act I is thus the "face" or *mukha* of the drama, in which the motive of the action occurs.

(2) The king engages the buffoon to work some contrivance whereby he can remain in the hermitage and pursue his beloved. This is the effort or *prayatna* he makes. The lovers are united but immediately parted, as the king has to go on royal business, which is his duty or *dharma*. Gautami who is Shakuntala's guardian and is responsible for protecting her virtue also proves to be an inhibiting factor. Acts II and III thus reflect what has begun in Act I.

(3) The "womb" or *garbha* of the drama is the period of separation, wherein hope of reunion is affirmed, despite absence. There is hope for a lawful state of wedlock completing the secret tryst of Act III. This is manifest on Shakuntala's part as she responds to the king's suit by leaving the hermitage for the royal capital. The king's rejection of her, which seems, in the *Mahabharata* version,[xi] the act of a Don Juan turned indifferent, is made suitable to our drama by the device of the sage's curse, which relieves Dushyanta of both his memory and his responsibility. This central section includes Act IV and the portion of Act V up to the removal of Shakuntala's veil in the presence of the king.

[xi] The original *Shakuntala* forms a single episode in the epic *Mahabharata.*

(4) The "reconsideration" or *vimarsa* begins with that violent confrontation, which results in Shakuntala's withdrawal to heaven, continues with the king's lamentations after recovering his memory, and ends with his recall to *dharma* or duty by an appeal from Indra, the king of the gods. During Acts IV, V and VI, the lovers remain separated physically, if not emotionally. The certainty of the lovers now resides in the realization that they behave "out of character" in each other's absence and can be what they are in each other's presence. Thus, *dharma*, the fulfilling of one's proper role, which first separated them, now in effect reunites them. This section continues from Shakuntala's rejection in Act V through the end of Act VI.

(5) The "dénouement"or *nirvahana* bears fruit on two levels: physically, the young son borne of their union, their reunion in conformity with family and *brahmanical* tradition. This is Act VII.

Representation of an action in its completeness generalizes the central emotion along with its subsidiary ones. In *Shakuntala*, the primary emotion is love and secondary ones are sorrow, anger, caused by Durvasa's curse and followed by Dushyanta's rejection of Shakuntala resulting in a prolonged separation of the hero and the heroine. An emotion of aversion also arises, when the king rejects Shakuntala; an emotion of wonder arises when Shakuntala appears in Dushyanta's court and her mother the celestial nymph Menaka carries her away. Wonder is also caused when Dushyanta picks up Bharata's amulet, his son from Shakuntala, at the hermitage of Maricha without it being transformed into a snake, as prophesied by the latter.

In a similar manner *Hamlet* can be divided into several junctures though it doesn't completely fall in line with the prescribed dramatic structure of a Sanskrit play.

(1) Act I is the "face" or *mukha* of the drama, which throws the seeds of action for the protagonist. This is manifested in the appearance of the Ghost and his command to Hamlet to rise to his duty and seek vengeance for the injustice committed to the throne of Denmark.

(2) Act II and III is a reflection of what has occurred in the first act and is thus the *pratimukha*. This involves Hamlet's pretended madness, his staging of the play to test the truth of the Ghost's words, his harranguing of Gertrude in the closet scene and his slaying of Polonius.

(3) In Act IV the plot thickens with Hamlet sailing off to England, his discovery of the king's treachery, his outwitting the king through an exchange of letters and escaping death. This is the womb or the *garbha* of the play.

(4) Ophelia's madness and her death in Act IV and V is the fourth juncture or *vimarsa* of the play.

(5) The *nirvahana* or "dénoument" follows with Hamlet's revenge by slaying Claudius, Laertes's death and eventually his own end, all of which are depicted in Act V.

While commenting upon Bharata's *Rasasutra*, Abhinavagupta writes:

> All the Rasas thus consist in beatitude. But some of them, on account of the objects by which they are coloured, are not free from a certain touch of bitterness; this happens, for example, in the Heroic Rasa. For this consists of,and is animated by, precisely the firm endurance of misfortunes.[11]

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is in conformity with Abhinavagupta's statement that the heroic or *vira rasa* is animated by the firm endurance of misfortunes. Precisely speaking, this is the central point of Hamlet's misfortune, which causes the reversal of his fate. The drama is in Sanskrit terminology a *Prakarana*[xii] which means a drama where the hero is neither famous in history, legend or myths, nor does he come from any well-known family. The whole story is more or less the poet's own creation. The drama has been variously read and appreciated by innumerable critics during the last centuries. It goes without saying that the character of Hamlet is highly equivocal and no classification of male characters in Sanskrit poetics [xiii] would explain the character satisfactorily. However the category of *dhirodatta* could be applicable to him, but his sensibility, intellectuality, humanism and lovingness all might prompt to attribute to him the *dhiralalita* category as well. At times it appears that in him the *dhiralalita* predominates over the *dhirodatta*. The very entrance of Hamlet in the drama marks him as both a *dhiralalita* and *dhira-prasanta* personality, which means he is a conscientious and serious person. His first appearance on the stage and his inaugural dialogues with both Claudius and Gertrude reveal the seriousness of his purpose. Consider the dialogues:

> King Claudius ….But now, my cousin Hamlet, and my son--
> Hamlet. A little more than kin, and less than kind.
> King Claudius. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
> Hamlet. Not so, my lord. I am too much I' th'sun.

[xii] The *Natysastra* identifies ten major types of plays and focuses almost exclusively on two of the ten types; the *nataka* and the *prakarana*. The main characteristics of the *nataka* are that it has as its theme a popular story concerning the exploits of a hero who is either a royal sage or a king. In contrast the *prakarana* has a story that is solely invented by the author. But Bharata's list in the *Natyasastra* is apparently not exhaustive as the existence of additional dramatic types has been mentioned by other ancient writers. Ten so-called minor (*uparupaka*) types of drama are discussed in ancient literature.

[xiii] Sanskrit poetics gives us altogether forty-eight subdivisions of the hero which can be rearranged into four types viz.(i) the brave and the high spirited (*dhirodatta*) (ii) the brave and haughty (*dhiroddhata*) (iii) the brave and sensitive (*dhiralalita*) (iv) the brave and serene (*dhira-prasanta*)

(I ii: 64-67)

The situation and the dialogues of Hamlet himself strongly reveal the dual emotions of the character, disgust about an event and a firm internal resolution to endure any kind of misfortune that might befall in eradicating the cause of his disgust. The audience is immediately aware of the clouds of misfortune that are soon to cover the future course of their lives. Both passages are extraordinarily ironical in revealing this misfortune. Hamlet's assumption of this misfortune is revealed in his answer to the queen:

> Queen Gertrude. Good Hamlet, cast thy nightly colour off…….
> Thou know'st 'tis common—all that lives must die,
> Passing through nature to eternity.
>
> Hamlet. Ay, madam, it is common.
>
> Queen Gertrude. If it be,
> Why seems it so particular with thee?
>
> Hamlet. Seems, madam? Nay it *is*. I know not 'seems'.
> 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good-mother,
> Nor customary suits of solemn black,
> Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
> No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
> Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
> Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief
> That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
> For they are actions that a man might play;
> But I have that within which passeth show—
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

(I ii: 68-86)

The reply is probably the clearest indication of Hamlet's decisive character. Neither in his mind nor in his action is there any probability as indicated by his rejection of the word "seems." Nothing "seems" in his life. As he says, he knows not "seems." In his dictionary of experience and understanding of the course of life, the word "seems" is simply absent. He doesn't know it. Of course there are passages in the play, which have

reasonably provoked scholars to interpret and judge the tragic end of Hamlet as a result of his indecision. To cite a few examples:

> Hamlet. To be, or not to be; that is the question:
> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And, by opposing end them.
>
> (III i: 58- 62)

And:

> Hamlet. Now might I do it pat, now a is praying,
> And now I'll do't and so a goes to heaven,
> And so am I revenged. That would be scanned.
> A villain kills my father, and for that
> I, his sole son, do this same villain send
> To heaven.
> O, this is hire and salary, not revenge!
> A took my father grossly, full of bread,
> With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May;
> And how his audit stands, who knows save heaven?
> But in our circumstance and course of thought
> 'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged
> To take him in the purging of his soul,
> When he is fit and seasoned for this passage?
> No.
>
> (III iii: 73-96)

But these cases might be considered as Shakespeare's architectonic skill in the formulation of a character by applying dramatic complexity. In other words, these passages have contributed to the multidimensional character of Hamlet whose firm determination of taking revenge in appropriate time has undergone contemplation over the possible failures in attaining the desired success that contributes to the dramatic complexity of the character.

Hamlet is further courageous enough to clear the sky of all clouds and make the sun beam the brightest. Hamlet's statement that he is never in the clouds but always in the sun (I ii: 67) rejects any possibility of indisposition and indecisiveness in his character.

The speech reveals that he knows the truth, whatever this truth may be. His precise speech "I am too much i' th' sun" (I ii: 67) is a perfect example of *dhvani*, which might be interpreted as both *vastu-dhvani* and *rasa-dhvani* (pages 122-123). In its *vastu-dhvani* aspect, it reveals his truthfulness, learning, wisdom, clarity of experience and expression and pinpointedness of his motive. The ambiguity of the speech might /should reveal to the king that he knows the truth i.e. he knows that Claudius has murdered his father. In its *rasa-dhvani* aspect, it reveals that (for the audience) he expresses his disgust as well as his being heroic enough to be successful in taking revenge. Thus, the play begins with two emotions, disgust and courage—the latter predominating over the former. The audience naturally expects the predominance of the emotion of courage and the generation of *vira rasa*. In fact, the major part of the structure of the play appears to be meant for the generation of this *vira rasa* as it ordinarily happens in any revenge play. An audience of any common revenge play would expect that through adversity the hero would finally kill the villain and gain the throne. But characteristic for a Shakespearean play, the structure of *Hamlet* is most intricately interwoven. No straightforward principle of Sanskrit dramatic structure is noted here. One can however match the structure of *Hamlet* with the prescribed structure of Sanskrit drama.

Had it been a Sanskrit drama in its traditional form with a proposal for displaying *vira rasa*, Ophelia would not have drowned herself, Hamlet would not have killed Polonious and in spite of a probable misunderstanding between Ophelia and Hamlet, they would have had a reunion in the final scene after Hamlet's murder of Claudius, and the recovery of his kingdom, ending with his own coronation in the presence of Laertes. All misunderstandings with Laertes would have been cleared up and he would have proved to

be a true friend for all times to come. Hamlet would have sung the *Bharata Vakya* (benediction) that divinity may bless Denmark forever, the subjects may live happily and that the Almighty should grant him permanent bliss as king Dushyanta sang the *Bharata Vakya* in the final scene in the play *Shakuntala* by Kalidasa:

> King: May the king serve nature's good!
> May priests honour the goddess of speech!
> And may Siva's dazzling power destroy
> My cycle of rebirths!

6.3 *Hamlet* and the *Rasa* Theory

Indian dramatic tradition lays prime emphasis on the emotions aroused in the audience. It is not the motivation of the protagonist but the emotions of the audience that is taken into consideration. There is however a link between the two. The entire atmosphere of the theatrical presentation including the emotions expressed by the actor or actress creates a specific mental state in the mind of the viewer. This mental state or feeling could gradually intensify leading to a longer lasting emotion or it could vanish immediately and become quickly replaced by another. In this manner, the whole dramatic presentation produces a series of emotions either durable or momentary, so that for the spectator the play basically becomes a journey through a wide spectrum of emotions.

In the case of *Hamlet*, the protagonist occupies a central position in the generation of emotions. As it can be seen later, with a few exceptions, the whole emotional process of the viewer revolves around Hamlet. One reason is that unlike other Shakespearean characters like Macbeth or Othello, Hamlet is an upright man and his suffering as a hero enjoys a much higher degree of empathy from the audience. Moreover there is not a

single scene in the entire play where Hamlet doesn't figure and his powerful soliloquies touch the audience at a higher mental plane. Keeping this in mind, I proceed to make a detailed analysis of the entire play taking the theory of *rasa* with all its intricacies into account, in order to study the development of the individual *rasas*.

ACT I

The opening scene of the play arouses a feeling of wonder (*adbhuta rasa*) and then strikes fear (*bhayanaka rasa*) in the audience at the mention of the apparition:

> Marcellus…Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.
> Therefore I have entreated him along
> With us to watch the minutes of this night,
> That if again this apparition come….
>
> (I i: 23-26)

The feelings of fear and wonder are intensified at the appearance of the Ghost:

> Horatio….It harrows me with fear and wonder.
>
> (I i: 42)

But since wonder and fear cannot co-exist, being opposing emotions, it is fear or *bhayanaka rasa*, which supersedes wonder (pages 100 & 102).

Running parallel to wonder, there is a trace of valour or heroism (*vira rasa*) at the sight of the Ghost, which had appeared in the form of the deceased king, in all his knightly armour:

> Marcellus. Is it not like the King?
> Horatio…Such was the very armour he had on
> When he th' ambitious Norway combated.
> So frowned he once when, in an angry parley
> He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice.
> 'Tis strange.
>
> (I i: 57-63)

Vyabhicaribhavas or secondary feelings of doubt, suspicion and apprehension appear simultaneously to aid and intensify the basic emotion of fear or *bhayanaka rasa*:

Horatio….This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

(I i: 68)

Barnardo….How now, Horatio! You tremble and look pale.

(I i: 51)

The transitory feeling of doubt is reflected in line 63 (‘’Tis strange), whereas suspicion is reflected in lines 106.2 to 106.4:

Barnardo…. Well may it sort that this portentous figure
Comes armèd through our watch so like the king
That was and is the question of these wars.

We notice feelings of apprehension in the following lines:

Horatio….. And even the like precurse of feared events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climature and countrymen.

(I i: 106.14--106.18)

Vira rasa or heroism reiterates in several places like:

Horatio. Such was the very armour he had on
When he th' ambitious Norway combated.
So frowned he once when, in an angry parley
He smote the sledded Polacks on the ice

(I i: 59-62)

Horatio…our last king,
Whose image even but now appeared to us,
Was as you know by Fortinbras of Norway,
Thereto pricked on by a most emulate pride,
Dared to the combat; in which our valiant Hamlet--
For so this side of our known world esteemed him--
Did slay this Fortinbras…..

(I i: 79-85)

And:

Horatio. …In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
A little ere the mightiest Julius fell….

(I i: 106.6-106.7)

These momentary emotions again give way to wonder and amazement at the reappearance of the Ghost, re-instilling the fear (*bhayanaka rasa*) in the audience. The strange phenomenon initially evoking wonder, eventually leads to fear or *bhayanaka rasa*. So wonder and fear alternate in quick succession until wonder succumbs to fear. Both opposing emotions appear to be equally powerful, but it is the negative emotion of fear, which suppresses its opponent wonder, and takes precedence (pages 100 & 102). The transitory feelings (*vyabhicaribhavas*) arising out of these emotions are doubt, suspicion and apprehension. *Vira rasa* introduced at an early stage, though inherently a basic or durable emotion, becomes overpowered by fear and is reduced to the status of a secondary emotion like its counterpart, wonder. Thus fear manifests itself as the dominant *rasa*.

The second scene reveals Hamlet's instinctive distrust towards Claudius and his utter disgust (*jugupsa bhava*) for the queen for her hasty marriage with her brother-in-law, a union he calls "incest". The intensity of his disgust is artfully exhibited throughout the scene as in the following lines:

> Hamlet…. frailty, thy name is woman—
> A little month, or ere those shoes were old
> With which she followed my poor father's body
> Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she—
> O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
> Would have mourned longer! —married with my uncle,
> My father's brother, but no more like my father
> Than I to Hercules; within a month,
> Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
> Had left the flushing of her galled eyes,
> She married. O most wicked speed, to post
> With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
>
> (I ii: 146-157)

Hamlet's bitterness (disgust) can also be seen in lines 175-182:

> Horatio. My lord, I came to see your father's funeral.
> Hamlet. I prithee do not mock me, fellow-student;

> I think it was to see my mother's wedding.
> Horatio. Indeed, my lord, it followed hard upon.
> Hamlet. Thrift, thrift, Horatio. The funeral baked meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables.
> Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven
> Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio.

Through Hamlet's disgust, *bibhatsa rasa* (aversion) is created in the minds of the audience. Associated with this emotion are other subsidiary feelings or *vyabhicaribhavas* like Hamlet's mood of dejection at certain periods. When Gertrude expresses her concern that it seems like Hamlet is still mourning the loss of his father, he reaffirms it in the following passage:

> Hamlet. Seems, madam? Nay, it *is*. I know not 'seems'.
> 'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good-mother,
> Nor customary suits of solemn black,
> Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
> No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
> Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,
> Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief
> That can denote me truly. These indeed 'seem,'
> For they are actions that a man might play;
> But I have that within which passeth show—
> These but the trappings and the suits of woe.
>
> (I ii: 76-86)

One also notices signs of dejection in the following lines of *Hamlet*:

> Hamlet. O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew,
> Or that the Everlasting had not fixed
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter!. O God, O God,
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!
>
> (I ii: 129-133)

Intertwined with *bibhatsa rasa* or aversion is another subsidiary feeling of suspicion caused by Hamlet's inherent distrust towards Claudius, revealed in line 65 where he describes him as "A little more than kin and less than kind." Also Hamlet's words "I am too much I' th' sun" (line 67) can give rise to variety of meanings. This is a typical

example of *dhvani*, which will be discussed in later chapters. The unpleasant feelings of doubt and suspicion are also clearly perceived in Hamlet's remark, "All is not well. I doubt some foul play" (lines 254-255).

In the second part of this scene, wonder or *adbhuta rasa* is again experienced when Horatio, Marcellus and Bernardo relate their experience with the Ghost.

Like in the first scene *adbhuta rasa* or wonder fades to the background, and *bibhatsa rasa* or disgust emerges more prominent.

Scene III does not evoke any *rasa*. Both Polonius and Laertes try to give some sound advice to Ophelia warning her not to succumb to Hamlet's advancements and proclamations of love. This scene reflects a temporary feeling of doubt (*vybhicaribhava)* regarding Hamlet's fidelity as a lover. The feeling of doubt is an associate of the basic emotion of love or *sringara rasa*.

Scene IV again brings forth the emotion of wonder (*adbhuta rasa*) at the reentry of the Ghost. There is a strong feeling of suspicion as to the real identity and intention of the Ghost:

> Hamlet….Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
> Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
> Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
> Thou com'st in such a questionable shape…..
>
> (I iv: 21-24)

Adbhuta rasa or wonder is immediately followed by the predominant emotion of fear or *bhayanaka rasa*. This fear gives rise to suspicion of the Ghost's motives:

> Hamlet. Why, what should be the fear?……
> Horatio. What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
> That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
> And there assume some other horrible form
> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason
> And draw you into madness?…..

(I iv: 45-55)

Scene V displays a sense of shock and anger at the Ghost's revelation. Its anger caused by Claudius' heinous crime is transmitted to Hamlet and manifests itself as *raudra rasa.* The Ghost's fury is expressed in the following words:

> Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
>
> (I v: 25)

Hamlet's fury is expressed in the following lines:

> Hamlet. O all you host of heaven! O earth! What else?
> And shall I couple hell? O fie! Hold, hold, my heart…..
>
> (I v: 92-93)

Side by side this anger is tainted with contempt and disgust towards Claudius and Gertrude:

> Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
> With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts—
> O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power
> So to seduce!—won to his shameful lust
> The will of my most seeming virtuous queen….
>
> (I v: 42-46)

Disgust and anger is also shown in the following words of Hamlet's speech:

> Hamlet.O most pernicious woman!
> O villain, villain, smiling, damnèd villain!
>
> (I.v: 105-106)

One also notices transient feelings (*vyabhicaribhavas*) of sadness or dejection:

> Ghost….O Hamlet, what a falling off was there!--
> From me, whose love was of that dignity
> That it went hand-in-hand even with the vow
> I made to her in marriage, and to decline
> Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor
> To those of mine!
>
> (I.v: 47-52)

There is a trace of heroism (*vira rasa*) when Hamlet swears revenge after the Ghost's revelation. "I have sworn't (line 113). However *vira rasa* is only a minor emotion.

Raudra rasa (anger) and disgust (*bibhatsa rasa*) are the two major *rasas* of equal prominence.

ACT II

In the first scene of the second act, we are confronted with the emotion of sorrow or *soka bhava* expressed by Hamlet and interpreted by Polonius as "the ecstasy of love" (line 104). The *anubhavas* or physical gestures (pages 85-86) expressing Hamlet's sorrow or madness have been described in the following lines:

> Ophelia. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard,
> Then goes he to the length of of all his arm,
> And with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
> He falls to such perusal of my face
> As a would draw it. Long stayed he so.
> At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
> And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
> He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
> That it did seem to shatter all his bulk
> And end his being. That done, he lets me go,
> And, with his head over his shoulder turned,
> He seemed to find his way without his eyes,
> For out o'doors he went without their help,
> And to the last bended their light on me.
>
> (II i: 88-101)

The reason of Hamlet's sorrow or apparent madness is left unexplained and therefore fails to arise any specific *rasa* in the audience. At the most Hamlet's outward behaviour could lead to a temporary feeling of pity (*vyabhicaribhava*).

The second scene introduces an element of humour and brings out *hasya rasa* (comic) in the audience. The source of this *hasya* or laughter is Polonius' buffoonery, who is convinced of Hamlet's love-sickness and vehemently believes that to be the cause of his madness. Polonius' exaggerated speech only evokes ridicule and exasperates

Gertrude for its redundancy and poor wit. Not coming straight to the point, he goes on beating around the bush, trying to arouse suspense with a ludicrous jumble of words:

> Polonius….My liege and madam, to expostulate
> What majesty should be, what duty is,
> What day is day, night night, and time is time,
> Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time,
> Therefore, since brevity is the soul of wit,
> And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
> I will be brief. Your noble son is mad-
> 'Mad'call I it, for to define true madness,
> What is't but to be nothing else but mad?
> But let that go.
>
> Queen.Gertrude. More matter with less art.
>
> Polonius. Madam, I swear I use no art at all.
> That he is mad, 'tis true: 'tis true 'tis pity,
> And pity 'tis 'tis true a foolish figure,
> But farewell it, for I will use no art.
> Mad let us grant him, then, and now remains
> That we find out the cause of this effect--
> Or rather say the cause of this *defect*,
> For this effect defective comes by cause.
> Thus it remains, and the remainder thus
> Perpend.
> I have a daughter—have whilst she is mine—
> Who in her duty and obedience, mark,
> Hath given me this……
>
> (II ii: 87-109)

Later Hamlet's dialogue with Polonius also brings out *hasya rasa* (comic) by force of its wit and humour. Hamlet's madness seems to be a pretended madness and there is much truth and irony in his seemingly senseless words:

> Hamlet. Slanders, sir; for the satirical slave says here that old men
> have grey beards…..
> Polonius.[aside] Though this be madness, yet there is method in't.
> --Will you walk out of the air, my lord?
> Hamlet. Into my grave?
> Polonius. Indeed, that's out o'th' air.[Aside] How pregnant some
> times his replies are! A happiness that often madness hits on,
> which reason and sanity could not so prosperously be delivered of……
>
> (II ii:196-209)

In the next few lines Hamlet expresses his disgust or *jugupsa bhava* at the turn of events

in an implicit manner:

> Hamlet. In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true, she is a strumpet.
>
> (II ii: 230-231)

His disgust becomes more explicit when he calls Denmark a prison:

> Hamlet…..What have you, my good friends,
> deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison
> hither?
> Guildenstern. Prison, my lord?
> Hamlet Denmark's a prison.
> Rosencrantz. Then is the world one.
> Hamlet. A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards,
> and dungeons, Denmark being one o' th' worst.
> Rosencrantz. We think not so, my lord.
> Hamlet. Why then'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good
> or bad but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.
>
> (II ii: 235-245)

Hamlet's *jugupsa bhava* leads to *bibhatsa rasa* (disgust) in the audience. The feelings (*vybhicaribhavas*) of dejection and world-weariness expressed by Hamlet in the following lines intensify the *bibhatsa rasa*:

> Hamlet…. I have of late—but wherefore I know not—lost all
> my mirth , foregone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes
> so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the
> earth, seems to me a sterile promontory. This most excellent
> canopy the air, look you, this brave o'er-hanging,
> this majestical roof fretted with golden fire--why it appears
> no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours.
> What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason, how infinite
> in faculty, in form and moving, how express and admirable,
> in action, how like an angel, in apprehension, how
> like a god-- the beauty of the world, the paragon of animals!
> And yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man
> delights not me-- nor woman neither….
>
> (II ii: 287-299)

His disgust comes to the surface at his referral to the king and queen as his "uncle-father" and "aunt-mother" (line 358).

Though the mood changes to the comic at Polonius' entry, it remains tainted with disgust. Due to his foolish assumptions and unwanted intrusion, Polonius seems to have become an object of ridicule and aversion for Hamlet:

> Hamlet….That great baby you see there is not yet out of his
> swathing clouts.
>
> (II ii: 365-366)

Hamlet seems to find pleasure in encouraging Polonius' absurd notions of his behaviour and love-sickness for Ophelia:

> Hamlet.For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good
> kissing carrion—have you a daughter?
> Polonius. I have, my lord.
> Hamlet. Let her not walk i' th'sun. Conception is a blessing,but not as
> your daughter may conceive—friend, look to't.
> Polonius.[aside] How say you by that? Still harping on my daughter.
> Yet he knew me not at first….and truly, in my youth I suffered much
> extremity for love. Very near this.
>
> (II ii: 182-190)
>
> Hamlet. O Jephthah, judge of Israel,what a treasure hadst thou!
> Polonius. What a treasure had he,my lord?
> Hamlet.Why,
> 'One fair daughter and no more,
> The which he lovèd passing well'.
> Poloniud.[aside] Still on my daughter
>
> (II ii: 385-391)

Next follows the emotion of fear. The players arrive. Hamlet and one of the players recite a few lines of the play, *Aeneas'tale to Dido,* referring to Priam's slaughter by Pyrrhus. The gory details of the slaughter combined with the anticipation of Claudius' death in a similar manner, lend it an emotion of fear producing *bhayanaka ras*a in the audience.

This is again replaced by Hamlet's disgust; this time directed at his own self, at his inability to take action. Apparently in a confused state of mind, he calls himself a coward:

Hamlet…. Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing;…Am I a coward?
Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,
Plucks off my beard and blows it in my face,
Tweaks me by th' nose, gives me the lie i' th' throat
As deep as to the lungs? Who does me this?
Ha, 'swounds, I should take it; for it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered and lack gall….Bloody, bawdy villain!
Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
O, vengeance!--
Why, what an ass am I! Ay, sure, This is most brave,
That I, the son of a dear father murderèd,
Prompted to my revenge by heaven and hell,
Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words…..

(II ii: 543-563)

There is also anger and disgust for the king combined with disgust for his own self. However what he calls inaction doesn't seem to be so when viewed in the correct light. It is his sensitivity and self- restraint, which does not allow him to take any rash decision, let passion overpower his reasoning or prompt him to action without proper evidence. Not following blindly the Ghost's command, Hamlet seeks to verify the truth and appeal to his own better judgement before taking any decision. Despite his instinctive distrust for Claudius, he doesn't get carried away by the Ghost's words and wants to give the accused a fair chance. He couldn't condemn a non-guilty person however much he despised him. His calculated reasoning and fair judgement, even during periods of turbulence show true heroism in his nature.

As we can see, the predominating emotion in this scene is disgust which grips Hamlet almost constantly, mainly directed at his mother and her newly- wed husband and partly at Polonius for his unwanted intervention. The *rasa* derived is thus, *bibhatsa rasa*.

ACT III

In the first scene of the third act the king and queen discuss the cause of Hamlet's lunacy with Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and Polonius. Claudius views Hamlet's madness with suspicion. Guildenstern echoes this feeling, which is evident from the following lines:

> King Claudius. And can you by no drift of circumstance,
> Get from him why he puts on this confusion,
> Grating so harshly all his days of quiet
> With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?
>
> (III i: 1-4)

> Guildenstern….But with a crafty madness keeps aloof
> When we would bring him on to some confession
> Of his true state.
>
> (III i: 8-10)

The king's suspicion stems from his guilt that builds up a sense of insecurity from the fear of his crime being found out. The first clear indication of his guilt is seen in the passage below:

> King Claudius. [aside] O, tis too true.
> How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience.
> The harlot's cheek, beautied with plast'ring art,
> Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it
> Than is my deed to my most painted word.
> O heavy burden!
>
> (III i.52-56)

Next we come to those famous lines in the play:

> Hamlet. To be, or not to be; that is the question:
> Whether' tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And, by opposing end them…..
>
> (III i: 58-62)

Hamlet is in a state of inner conflict and deep contemplation. He does not allow his passion to cloud his reasoning. What is crucial to him is that he takes the nobler decision-- whether to suffer the "slings of fortune" or to fight and oppose it. At the same time he condemns himself for not taking immediate action and blames his own conscience for being the cause of his cowardice:

> Hamlet. Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,
> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought
> And enterprises of great pith and moment
> With this regard their currents turn awry
> And lose the name of action……
>
> (III i: 85-90)

Another cause of his utter dejection is unfulfilled love. Ophelia's rejection of his sincere love intensifies his grief, what he calls the "pangs of disprized love" (line 74). Hamlet's mental confusion and sorrow triggers *karuna rasa* (sorrow) in the audience.

Complementing Hamlet's dejection and sorrow is his total disgust. The disgust for his mother has developed into an aversion for womankind in general. He is disappointed with Ophelia for not responding to him and for being a puppet to her father's manipulation. His apparent harshness towards Ophelia actually discloses his contempt for the whole women race:

> Hamlet. Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform
> honesty from what it is to a bawd than the force of honesty can
> translate beauty into his likeness. This was sometime a
> paradox, but now the time gives it proof….
> You should not have believed me, for virtue cannot so
> inoculate our old stock but we shall relish of it.
> Get thee to a nunnery. Why wouldst thou be a breeder
> Of sinners?…
>
> (III i: 113-123)

He also derides Polonius when he says that "he may play the fool nowhere but in's own house" (lines 132-133).

Hidden behind all this confusion and outpour of emotion, there lies however a firmness in decision contradicting his previous soliloquy about his lack of decision (to be or not to be…).

Hamlet says in lines 147-148—"Those that are married already-- all but one-- shall live." This is an emphatic statement that Claudius is going to die at his hands.

Claudius who has overheard Hamlet's conversation with Ophelia is shrewd in detecting some melancholy in his countenance. For Claudius, this is a clear signal of a forthcoming danger. A guilty man, constantly aware of the crime he has committed, his fear gets rekindled and he plans to dispatch Hamlet off to England. His final words of caution are, "Madness in great ones must not unwatched go" (line 188).

So, in this scene, we notice the transitory feelings of suspicion and dejection. There is the major emotion of fear, which becomes overpowered and hence doesn't rise to the status of the main *rasa*. Hamlet, the character has become dominated by aversion and sorrow and as a whole produces *karuna rasa* (sorrow) in the audience.

In scene II the play is staged before the royal couple and other courtiers. Before the play begins, Hamlet gives instructions to Horatio to observe Claudius' reaction to the murder scene. Behind Hamlet's apparent inaction and confusion lies a rational thinking mind. He wants to set a trap for Claudius to test his guilt. He doesn't take the Ghost's words to be true without evidence. And he couldn't kill anyone without proper justification. Once Claudius' guilt is out in the open, Hamlet wouldn't hesitate to slay him and avenge his father's death. This is a truly heroic trait in his character.

Before the opening of the play, he behaves in a somewhat rude manner with Ophelia, even indulging in ribaldry:

Hamlet….here's mettle more attractive.
Do you think I meant country matters?
That's a fair thought to lie between maid's legs

(III ii: 99,105 &107)

These words actually reflect Hamlet's disgust but may not be strong enough to create *bibhatsa rasa* (disgust) as they are targetted towards Ophelia who remains an innocent victim of circumstances in the whole play. Rather they may arouse the transitory feeling of pity for her amongst the audience. Hamlet expresses his derision for Gertrude quite explicitly when he says:

Hamlet….For look how cheerfully my mother looks,
and my father died within's two hours.

(III ii: 114-115)

The play opens with the king and queen expressing their love for each other. The queen's exaggerated promises and vows of love and fidelity becomes only a mockery and generates *bibhatsa rasa* or disgust.

But the critical moment comes in the murder scene when the king suddenly arises giving clear evidence of his guilt. This is the moment Hamlet has been waiting for. The trap is successful and his purpose accomplished. Both Hamlet and Horatio are convinced of the Ghost's words. The situation is not powerful enough to generate any specific *rasa* but induces a strong feeling of excitement (*vybhicaribhava*).

Then enter Rosencrantz and Guildenstern for a private word with Hamlet. He is totally aware of the two men's intention, which is to extract the truth from him and convey it to the king. From the very beginning Hamlet views them with suspicion and contempt. In the midst of their conversation Polonius enters and passes him the queen's message that she wished to see him in her private chamber. Hamlet sets out on his second

purpose of explaining to Gertrude of her infidelity to her first husband. He wants to prick her conscience by making her aware of her unfaithfulness and lack of virtue.

As it can be seen, there are transitory feelings of suspicion, pity and excitement reinforcing the main emotions in this scene. However there are two major emotions overlapping each other i.e. disgust and heroism. The sources of disgust are the king and the queen as well as Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. But Hamlet's attitude displays one of heroism. However, being opposing emotions they repel each other and cannot occur simultaneously (page 100). In this case, following the *rasa* theorists, disgust (*bibhatsa*) gets the upper hand and becomes the principal emotion (page 102).

In the third scene, the king plans to send away Hamlet immediately to England, becoming aware that his dangerous secret is out. He asks Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to accompany Hamlet in this "speedy voyage." Claudius acts purely out of fear from Hamlet's wrath. His fear has turned into panic when he says to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern:

> King Claudius. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage,
> For we will fetters put upon this fear,
> Which now goes too free-footed.
>
> (III iii: 24-26)

Claudius is assayed by a strong sense of guilt. He calls his murder as that which has "the primal eldest curse upon't" (line 37). Though he wishes his sins to be washed away, he is unable to repent for his deeds. He knows atonement is not possible unless he rids himself of his ambition and other worldly desires which led him to fratricide:

> King.Claudius ….My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,
> And like a man to double business bound
> I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
> And both neglect. What if this cursèd hand
> Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
> Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens

To wash it white as snow…..
but O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be, since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder—
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.

(III iii: 40-55)

When the king kneels in prayer, Hamlet enters and finds a golden opportunity to slay him. But his over analytical mind steps in between. He doesn't believe his father's death will be avenged if he kills his murderer at prayer, for to take a man in the purging of his soul would only send him to heaven. By slaying Claudius now, he would undoubtedly follow the Ghost's command but its purpose would be lost.

So, here we find the subsidiary feeling of guilt (*vyabhicaribhava*) arising out of Claudius' fear, the primary emotion in this scene.

In the final scene (scene iv) of this act Polonius is slain by Hamlet. The purpose of killing Polonius is however, not clear. It could be that he mistakes Polonius for the king and slays him. Or it could be that Hamlet considers Polonius to be a prying nuisance and a danger to his motives and takes the opportunity to do away with him.

After getting rid of Polonius, Hamlet proceeds to goad his mother's conscience, to make her realize her gross mistake in forgetting her first husband and remarrying so hastily. In a rhapsody of words he praises his father and condemns the evil Claudius. It is his aim to prick his mother's conscience and make her see her own folly. Despite his contempt for Gertrude, he doesn't see her beyond atonement. He wants his mother to be cleared of all sins. In true repentance would her sin be atoned which is Hamlet's goal at the moment. Hamlet succeeds in his efforts when Gertrude begins to see her folly. Consumed by guilt she utters the following words:

Queen Gertrude. O Hamlet, speak no more!

> Thou turn'st my eyes into my very soul,
> And there I see such black and grained spots
> As will not leave their tinct.
> Hamlet.   Nay, but to live
> In the rank sweat of an enseaméd bed,
> Stewed in corruption, honeying and making love
> Over the nasty sty—
> Queen Gertrude.   O, speak to me no more!
> These words like daggers enter my ears.
> No more, sweet Hamlet.
>
> (III iv: 78-86)
>
> Hamlet….Confess yourself to heaven;
> Repent what's past, avoid what is to come,
> And do not spread the compost o'er the weeds
> To make them ranker….
> Queen Gertrude. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!
>
> (III iv: 140-147)

In justly turning away Gertrude from Claudius, Hamlet secures his first triumph over the murderer. Also in killing Polonius, he removes one thorn from his path. This success of the hero generates *vira rasa* (heroism) and remains the principal emotion in this scene.

There are several transient feelings or *vyabhicaribhavas* in this scene as well. There is surprise when Hamlet physically forces Gertrude to sit down; taken aback she shouts for help. There is visible shock at the unexpected killing of Polonius. There is the strong feeling of guilt already mentioned before. There is amazement at the appearance of the Ghost. The Ghost, which remains invisible to the queen causes her great amazement when Hamlet talks to it. She believes him to be mad and calls it "the very coinage of his brain" (line 127). Then the transient feeling of contempt appears when Hamlet talks of his two "friends" who are to accompany him on his voyage to England:

> Hamlet.There's letters sealed, and my two school-fellows--
> Whom I will trust as I will adders fanged….
>
> (III iv: 185.1-185.2)

And lastly disappointment is expressed when Gertrude remembers of Hamlet's

impending journey to England:

> Hamlet. I must of England.
> You know that?
> Queen Gertrude. Alack, I had forgot.
> ’Tis so concluded on.
>
> (III iv: 182-185)

ACT IV

The first scene of Act IV looks like a stage of confusion caused by Polonius’ death. The queen is in a state of shock at the turn of events. Still shaken by her son’s behaviour she blurts out before Claudius:

> Queen Gertrude. Mad as the sea and wind when both contend
> Which is the mightier. In his lawless fit,
> Behind the arras hearing something stir,
> Whips his rapier out and cries ‘A rat, a rat!,’
> And in his brainish apprehension kills
> The unseen good old man.
>
> (IV i: 6-10)

It is now the king’s turn to be shocked. His fear is rekindled and he dreads of what is to come. Completely aware now of Hamlet’s wrath, he realizes he might well have been the victim instead of Polonius. The transient feeling arising out of his fear is deception when he talks of his love for Hamlet. This is deception at its worst as in reality he is designing the murder of Hamlet, whom he considers his arch enemy at the moment. Losing no time he plans to ship off Hamlet the very next morning along with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. Shaken to the roots, Claudius exclaims that his “soul is full of discord and dismay” (line 40).

The main emotion or *rasa* in this scene is undoubtedly fear or *bhayanaka rasa* intensified by the subsidiary feelings or *vyabhicaribhavas* of shock and deception.

The second scene emits pure *bibhatsa rasa* or aversion. The king, his courtiers--Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and Polonius are all objects of Hamlet's aversion. He overtly expresses his contempt for the villainy of Claudius and the sycophancy of Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and Polonius. His contempt is matched by his wit when he replies to Rosencrantz's query:

> Rosencrantz. Take you me for a sponge, my lord?
> Hamlet. Ay, sir, that soaks up the king's countenance, his
> rewards, his authorities. But such officers do the King best service
> in the end. He keeps them like an apple in the corner of his jaw,
> corner of his jaw, first mouthed to be last swallowed. When he needs
> what you have gleaned, it is but squeezing you and,
> sponge you shall be dry again.
>
> (IV ii: 13-19)

Hamlet's witty sarcasm continues into the next scene when he calls the king a food for worms and addresses him as his mother. The comic interrupts Hamlet's contempt at this stage:

> King Claudius. Now, Hamlet where's Polonius?
> Hamlet. At supper.
> King Claudius. At supper? Where?
> Hamlet. Not where he eats, but where a is eaten. A certain
> convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is
> your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us,
> and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean
> beggar is but variable service—two dishes, but to one table.
> That's the end…………
> Hamlet….Farewell, dear mother.
> King Claudius.Thy loving father, Hamlet.
> Hamlet. My mother.Father and mother is man and wife, man
> and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother….
>
> (IV iii: 17-54)

These dialogues break the gravity of the whole atmosphere and can only erupt laughter (*hasa*) in the audience.

In this scene the king reveals his wicked designs of getting Hamlet executed in England. He is shrewd enough to realize that killing or imprisoning Hamlet in Denmark

would only bring about his own downfall as the prince is “loved of the distracted multitude” (line 4). This action of an evildoer, who doesn’t flinch from committing one crime after the other, simply draws anger or *raudra rasa* from the audience.

So here both the emotions of *raudra rasa* (anger) and *hasya rasa* (comic) run almost parallel to each other. Being friendly emotions, not opposed to the other (page 100), neither of them blocks the other and is free to take its own course. However, it may be concluded that *raudra rasa* ultimately prevails over *hasya rasa* as it appears at the end of the scene, creating a more lasting impression.

The fourth scene generates *karuna rasa* or sorrow at Hamlet’s pitiable condition. He believes himself to be a coward compared to Fortinbras who can march with pride with his vast army and has no compunction in laying down twenty thousand lives for the sake of a piece of land. In truth it is Hamlet’s higher sensitivity and compassion and his regard for human life that stands in his way. But Hamlet calls this conflict within his heart and mind as cowardice. His dejection is the source of *karuna rasa* in the audience.

The fifth scene of this act is a prolific exhibition of Ophelia’s anguish in the form of madness. Plunged in sorrow at Hamlet’s rejection of her and her father’s sudden death, she has gone mad. Her songs are clearly expressive of her longing for Hamlet (*vipralambha sringara* or love-in-separation) and her grief at her father’s death. Ophelia’s mournful distraction fills the heart with tenderness and evokes pure *karuna rasa*.

Laertes brings in the emotion of anger or *raudra rasa*. Believing Claudius to be the cause of his father’s death, he bravely confronts him swearing for vengeance. Seething with rage he challenges Claudius with the following words:

> Laertes. How came he dead? I’ll not be juggled with.

> To hell allegiance! Vows to the blackest devil,
> Conscience and grace to the profoundest pit!
> I dare damnation. To this point I stand,
> That both the worlds I give to negligence,
> Let come what comes. Only I'll be revenged
> Most thoroughly for my father.
>
> (IV v: 126-132)

Laertes' uncontrolled rage and fearless challenge are also signs of bravery. Here, *raudra rasa* (anger) unfolds heroism and gives rise to *vira rasa* as well. The two friendly emotions (page 100) support each other and run parallel.

Laertes is in for a second shock (transient feeling or *vyabhicaribhava*) at the re-entry of Ophelia. His sister's loss of sanity doubles his grief resulting in *karuna rasa* in the audience. So the total effect in this scene is one of *karuna rasa*, *raudra rasa* and *vira rasa* remaining only secondary.

In scene vi, the sailors deliver Hamlet's letter to Horatio, where he expresses his wish to meet him as soon as possible. Hamlet's urgency stirs up some excitement (*vyabhicaribhava*) in the audience of what is to follow. The scene is short and does not produce any *rasa*.

In the seventh and final scene of this act, Claudius is back in his own element, cunning and sly, contriving Hamlet's death at the hands of Laertes. Very tactfully, he tries to instigate Laertes against Hamlet, goading his conscience towards performing his filial duty of avenging his father's death:

> King Claudius. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
> Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
> A face without a heart?
>
> (IV vii: 89-91)
>
> King Claudius…..What would you undertake
> To show yourself in deed your father's son in deed
> More than in words?

(IV vii: 96-98)

Laertes' countenance is one of grief and rage:

Laertes. And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desp'rate terms,
Who has, if praises may go back again,
Stood challenger, on mount, of all the age
For her perfections. But my revenge will come.

(IV vii: 25-29)

A master of deception, Claudius plans a scheme with Laertes, to murder Hamlet:

King Claudius. Let's further think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit us to our shape…Therefore this project
Should have a back or second that might hold
If this should blast in proof…
When in your motion you are hot and dry—
As make your bouts more violent to that end—
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepared him
A chalice for the nonce, whereon but sipping,
If he by chance escaped your venomed stuck,
Our purpose may hold there—

(IV vii: 120-133)

Claudius' amorality and wickedness can only bring out anger or *raudra rasa* in the audience. This *raudra rasa* is interrupted by sorrow or *karuna rasa* at the news of Ophelia's death. Her death while deepening Laertes' grief, adds fuel to the fire, intensifying his rage:

Laertes. Alas, then she is drowned?
Queen Gertrude. Drowned, drowned.
Laertes. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia
And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet
it is our trick; nature her custom holds,
Let shame say what it will. When these are gone,
The woman will be out. Adieu, my lord.
I have a speech of fire that fain would blaze,
But that this folly douts it.

(IV vii: 155-163)

So, the two major *rasas* of sorrow (*karuna*) and anger (*raudra*) appear simultaneously in equal intensity or alternate in quick succession. According to the *rasa* theory both these emotions are opposing and do not go with each other (page 100). However the opposition between two emotions can be removed by directing the opposite emotions on different objects (page 101), which is the case here. Claudius' vile scheming combined with Laertes' rage is the source of *raudra rasa* whereas Ophelia's madness and her subsequent death is the cause of *karuna rasa*.

ACT V

In the first scene, Ophelia's death can bring out no other emotion other than sadness or *karuna rasa*. The grim humour might provide some mental relief but may not draw laughter, as Ophelia's tragedy lies too heavily on the minds of the spectators.

Then follows the entry of the king, the queen and other royal attendants with Ophelia's corpse. A funeral scene particularly that of the innocent Ophelia, naturally culminates in *karuna rasa*. Hamlet is aghast at the mention of Ophelia's death; never for a moment having imagined the coffin to be carrying his beloved's body. From shock (transient feeling or *vyabhicaribhava*) follows intense grief. The queens parting words pour salt to his wounds:

> Hamlet. What, the fair Ophelia!
> Queen Gertrude. [scattering flowers] Sweets to the sweet. Farewell.
> I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife.
> I thought, thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
> And not t' have strewed thy grave.
>
> (V i: 226-230)

Both Hamlet and Laertes, in their mourning lose their composure, which is but natural in

the face of grief, and end up in a tussle. Laertes attacks Hamlet believing him to be the cause of his sister and father's death. So the emotion of sorrow is momentarily interrupted by *raudra* or anger, breaking the continuity of *karuna rasa*, but only for a short period.

Hamlet's bereavement is genuine:

> Hamlet [Coming forward] What is he whose grief
> Bears such an emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow
> Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
> Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
> Hamlet the Dane. [Hamlet leaps in after Laertes]
>
> (V i: 238-242)
>
> Hamlet. I loved Ophelia. Forty thousand brothers
> Could not, with all their quantity of love,
> Make up my sum.
>
> (V i: 254-256)

These words speak of the depth of his love. He had loved Ophelia all along despite the fact that he had previously claimed not to have loved her anymore and perhaps broken her heart. *Sringara rasa* (love) arises but subsides immediately in this tragic moment.

So the whole scene reverberates with *karuna rasa* only being shortly intermitted by *raudra rasa* (rage) and *sringara rasa* (love). The introduction of these opposing emotions (page 100) does not aid *karuna rasa* but only succeeds in breaking its continuity and becomes subordinate to it.

The second scene introduces more intrigue into the play. Hamlet, constantly suspicious of Claudius' motives accidentally discovers the latter's evil designs of doing away with him. Very cleverly, Hamlet foils his plans and sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to the gallows instead. Hamlet, thoroughly fed up with their sycophancy feels they deserve no better end:

> Hamlet.Why, man, they did make love to this employment.

> They are not near my conscience. Their defeat
> Doth by their own insinuation grow.
>
> (V ii: 58-60)

Any friend of the king, who is now Hamlet's sworn enemy, becomes an enemy too. From this viewpoint Polonius, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern who are Claudius' friends are Hamlet's enemies and have been disposed off one after the other. It is unfortunate that Polonius happened to be the father of his beloved, but his constant interference and contriving had made him a formidable enemy. So he had to die. Gradually removing from his path, one thorn after the other, Hamlet seeks to reach his ultimate enemy, his final target.

On going through the play, the general impression could be that Hamlet has been procrastinating in his duty of avenging his father. But in retrospect, one can perceive fairly reasonable grounds for his supposed delay in action. First, he wanted clear evidence of Claudius' guilt. This is undisputedly an admirable strength of character. After his test, he is convinced of the latter's guilt by acquiring the evidence he has been looking for. But what evidence could he give to the people of Denmark? Who would believe his tale of a Ghost commanding him to action? Wouldn't his tale be misinterpreted as a guise for his thwarted ambition? In reality, it probably isn't that easy to slay Claudius as it appears in the play, and Hamlet has to look for a proper opportunity for it.

The final scene of the play is mainly a mixture of *vira rasa* (heroism) and *karuna rasa* (sorrow) with a trace of sarcasm (*vyabhicaribhava* or subsidiary feeling). The latest victim of this sarcasm is the courtier Osric, whom Hamlet calls a water-fly (line 84). This secondary feeling is too mild and fails to create the stronger emotion of disgust or *bibhatsa*.

Hamlet clearly displays his bravery in this scene. Not enraged by Laertes' violent attack on him in the cemetery, Hamlet acknowledges the injustice he has done to Laertes and fully understands the tumult in his mind:

> Hamlet….But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
> That to Laertes I forgot myself;
> For by the image of my cause I see
> The portraiture of his. I'll court his favours.
> But sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
> Into a tow'ring passion.
>
> (V ii: 76-81)

Without any compunction or a moment's hesitation, Hamlet accepts Laertes' challenge for a duel, in spite of being aware of the latter's ingenuity in sword fighting. As befits a hero, with true humility, he asks for Laertes' pardon and accepts his hand of friendship:

> Hamlet [to Laertes]. Give me your pardon, sir. I've done you wrong;
> But pardon't as you are a gentleman….
> That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house
> And hurt my brother.
>
> (V ii: 163-181)

Hamlet's triumph lies in Laertes' forgiveness and acceptance of his hand of friendship. But Laertes' forgiveness doesn't make him flinch from a battle, notably a sign of bravery:

> Laertes….I do receive your offered love like love,
> And will not wrong it.
> Hamlet. I do embrace it freely,
> And will this brothers' wager frankly play.
> [To attendants] Give us the foils.
>
> (V ii: 188-192)

Throughout the combat Hamlet shows his skill and courage. He commits his final act of heroism in slaying the king, fulfilling the task of the Ghost and his duty towards his father.

Karuna or sorrow is obviously generated at the death of the hero. Before dying Hamlet is cleared of the burden of his guilt, when Laertes realizes his falling into the trap of the king's plotting. His words serve to intensify the depth of the sorrow:

> Laertes. He is justly served.
> It is a poison tempered by himself.
> Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet.
> Mine and my father's death come not upon thee,
> Nor thine on me.
>
> (V ii: 269-273)

The play ends with a final homage to Hamlet's noblesness and bravery complementing the atmosphere of sorrow or *karuna*:

> Fortinbras….Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
> For he was likely, had he been put on,
> To have proved most royally; and for this passage,
> The soldiers' music and the rites of war
> Speak loudly for him.
>
> (V ii: 339-344)

As we have seen, a play according to the Sanskrit canon must have a single dominant emotion although there may be several other subsidiary emotions. *Hamlet* initially deals with two emotions disgust (*bibhatsa rasa*) and courage (*vira rasa*), the former dominating the latter until the middle of the play when courage or heroism and sorrow (*karuna rasa*) start taking precedence. Thereafter the course of his action is so confused that the audience is at a loss to be sure of the dominating emotion. There is no doubt that Hamlet loved Ophelia, as also the world and the life around him. But a series of events following the death of his father, such as his mother's marriage to Claudius and the latter's coronation, have aroused a strong aversion in Hamlet, for all that he loved earlier. It is not only his mother; Ophelia has also been a target, though not directly.

Polonius has been his target because of his narrow thinking and feeble way of action, deciding always to coax the king. From the very beginning Polonius considers Hamlet's peculiar behaviour as a sign of madness and melancholy due to his love for Ophelia and rather foolishly tries to convince both the king and the queen about this matter. It is for this foolishness that he has also been a target of Hamlet's aversion or disgust. Hamlet also expresses his aversion for all those sycophants like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, who had their associations with and subservience to the king. His aversion is not definite until his experience with the Ghost and this aversion is not confirmed until the performance of a drama within a drama. Although the Ghost particularly asks Hamlet not to take any action against his mother, it nevertheless goads him to hit her conscience. Hamlet thus obeys the Ghost and stimulates Gertrude to realize the sin she has committed. It seems the characters that are the targets of his aversion only consider him mad, or rather, in reverse, he is pretending to be mad while dealing with them. He speaks to his mother in the closet scene:

> Hamlet …That I essentially am not in madness,
> But mad in craft.
>
> (III iv: 171-172)

What is revealed ironically (*vyanjana*) is that both the king and Polonius are simply insensitive persons. The king is insensitive because of his brutality, cruelty and selfish opportunism. Polonius' selfishness lies in his foolish assumptions. Gertrude is undoubtedly intuitive as befits a mother. But this intuition and sensitivity are forcefully suppressed. While the king is shrewd and intelligent in studying Hamlet, Polonius' analyses are only ridiculously superficial. It is only Gertrude who has a real sense of concern and pity for Hamlet. She is truly worried and wishes that Hamlet's good sense be

restored. Hamlet's aversion for his mother has reasonably diminished his love and devotion for her. A serious and sensitive man of Hamlet's character would obviously pay more priority of attention to carry out the instructions of the Ghost. And in doing so the warmth of love would naturally get cold. Here is the source of the emotion of sorrow or *karuna*. The total situation now is sufficiently intensified (*alambana vibhava*) to stimulate sorrow. A situation, which, Bharata calls curse (*sapa*) and Abhinavagupta interprets as *asakya pratikara*—an adverse situation beyond any remedy (*pratikara*). The hero is unable to overcome it although he wants to overcome it. Hamlet misbehaves with Ophelia consciously and intentionally but not deliberately. As S.H. Butcher considers this to be one of the four types of *hamartia*, as causing sorrow and suffering of a tragic hero, originally pointed out by Aristotle. To quote Butcher at length:

> As a synonym of hamartia and as applied to a single act, it denotes an error due to inadequate knowledge of particular circumstances. According to strict usage we should add the qualification, that the circumstances are such as might have been known. Thus it would cover any error of judgement arising from a hasty or careless view of the special case; an error which in some degree is morally culpable, as it might have been avoided. Error of this kind has the highest claim to pity or consideration. But the more proper term ishatuchema 'misfortune'. In either case, however the hamartia is also more laxly applied to an error due to unavoidable ignorance, for which error is unintentional; it arises from want of knowledge; and its good quality will depend on whether the individual is himself responsible for his ignorance. Distinct from this, but still limited in its reference to a single act, it is the moral hamartia proper, a fault or error where the act is conscious and intentional, but not deliberate. Such are acts committed in anger or passion. Lastly, the word may denote a defect of character, distinct on the one hand from an isolated error or fault, and, on the other, from the vice which has its seat in a depraved will. This use, though rarer, is still Aristotlean. Under this head would be included any human frailty or moral weakness, a flaw of character that is not tainted by a vicious purpose. In our passage there is much to be said in favour of the last sense, as it is here brought into relation with other words of purely moral significance, words moreover which describe not an isolated act, but a more permanent state.[12]

It is to the third kind of *hamartia* that Hamlet's crisis belongs. It may be noted that Bharata's concept of *sapa* (curse) and Abhinavagupta's interpretation of the same as *asakya pratikara* causing sorrow cover all the categories of *hamartia*.

However, Hamlet faces adversities to work out the appropriate remedy. He slowly inches his way towards his mission of taking revenge. This is a progress for the generation of *vira rasa* (heroism), although this *vira rasa* is clearly associated with *bibhatsa* (aversion) since Hamlet's motive for taking revenge though prompted by the Ghost, is stimulated by his disgust. In his determination to attain his goal of taking revenge, he deliberately assumes a pattern of confusing behaviour (madness in craft) whereas in reality he is extremely conscious of his own self, treading gingerly to attain a steady result. In my view there is no indecisiveness in his character, there is no helplessness in his consciousness. Only that he is not a man of hasty decision as is his counterpart, Othello. He is a man of cool deliberation, showing stability of character. Step by step, he moves ahead. He has an ability to take advantage of even the adversities by transforming them suitably for the success of his purpose. His killing of Polonius is not at all a sign of melancholy or confusion. His comparison of the behaviour of Polonius with that of a rat (III iv: 23) is absolutely justified. He does it consciously although again by his craftiness, he begs apology from Laertes. An ideal example of his ability to transform disadvantages to advantages is his handling of Claudius' letter to the king of England.

Gradually he has been successful in generating *vira rasa*. He is really a *vira* (hero) in not murdering Claudius at his prayer as he says that by killing him during such an act, he would rather have immortalized him (sent him to the divine) instead of avenging him:

> Hamlet. Now might I do it pat, now a is a-praying.
> And now I'll do't and so a goes to heaven;
> And so am I revenged. That would be scanned

A villain kills my father, and for that
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heaven.

(III iii: 73-78)

Obviously with his heroic motive, he suppresses his passion for Ophelia He is not a *dhiralalita* (sensitive) character like Udayana in *Swapnavasavadutta* who could sacrifice heroism for the sake of love.[xiv] A mixture of *dhira-prasanta* and *dhirodatta* (see footnote on page 141) character, he acknowledges his love for Ophelia that is suppressed for the heroic purpose—"I did love you once" (III i: 116).

Here is a case where *vira rasa* (heroism) dominates over *sringara rasa* (love) and though there is a scope for generation of *karuna* (sorrow) from *vipralambha sringara* (love-in-separation), as it is mostly appreciated, in my view, this is only a secondary point of Hamlet's tragic ending, generating finally *karuna rasa*. In fact, Hamlet's failure in love is not at all a *peripetia* since he has deliberately suppressed it and this suppression is not at all causing any serious disappointment in Hamlet. As it appears, rather his affair with Ophelia, prior to his father's murder, to his mother's remarriage and to the Ghost's communication was a youthful occasion as it happens to a man before he enters the seriousness of life. But for that matter, it cannot be said that Hamlet is insensitive to love or passion. He certainly loved Ophelia seriously and would have been happy to have her, but as it happens, he doesn't mind seriously, if he suppresses this passion, ignores and neglects her for the time being. He could have rejected Ophelia meaning it to be a temporary suspension. Hamlet becomes aware of the realities of life only after the murder

[xiv] *Swapnavasavadatta* or *TheVision of Vasavadatta* is the most respected of Bhasa's (2nd century B.C ?.) plays. It tells of king Udayana, a ruler who is pressured by his minister of state to marry the daughter of a powerful ruler in order to strengthen his reign and protect his kingdom. The king however, is too devoted to his wife to consider such a marriage. But the queen is ready to sacrifice her happiness to save the kingdom.

of his father and the events thereafter have stimulated in him an awareness of the complexities of life, and willingly, without any remorse he has tried to set aside his affair with Ophelia. This is precisely the reason for his disgust with the foolishness of Polonius, especially at a time when he is disturbed by the red signals of the complex cross roads of life which he considers more serious than indulging in youthful passion. Polonius foolishly assumes that Hamlet's involvement with Ophelia has upset his mental equilibrium. This is perhaps the reason for his utter disgust with Polonius. He smells a positive connivance between the king and Polonius. He is disappointed in Ophelia for being a slave to her father's will. Hamlet's apparently offensive behaviour to Ophelia reveals (*dhvani*) his disgust with the total situation. He is unable to express reasonably his love for Ophelia. It is but natual for a serious man of Hamlet's type to be disgusted with the nuptial bed in general as also with the women's race, which could so easily forget the tie with the first husband and readily opt for sharing the bed of the second husband. It is rather Ophelia who is melancholic or gullible in handing over Hamlet's letter to her father and losing patience in waiting for an appropriate opportunity to understand his behaviour. The Ghost is a symbol of the mysteries of life that life is not as it commonly appears; smooth sailing, easy going, lovely and desirable. Life is of course desirable, but desirable with the full knowledge of its complexities and not with any foolish assumptions. The Ghost reveals that (*dhvani*) everything in life cannot be interpreted in terms of empirical experience as Horatio speaks to Hamlet:

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.
>
> (I v: 168-169)

Mysteries of life are always covered and to unravel the truth covered under day-to-day experiences one needs a supernatural insight. Krishna in the *Geeta* calls this supernatural insight a *divyachakshu* or a divine sight when in spite of Krishna's revelation of his universal form, Arjuna fails to realize the truth. Krishna then endows him with a supernatural insight for visualizing the truth (*Geeta* xi: 8). In the play, the Ghost functions in a similar manner. It is only Hamlet who perceives the truth whereas others fail. Hamlet is aware of this truth of life but Ophelia fails to cope with him.

Thus, as opposed to the view of S.C. Sengupta, my opinion is that, clearly intertwined with aversion (*bibhatsa*) is heroism (*vira*) and also figuring prominently is the emotion of sorrow or *karuna rasa*. Sengupta argues that while revenge is the purported theme of the play, the core subject is the utter revulsion caused by a mother's unchastity, which is revealed, to us through *dhvani*. Hamlet's disgust for his mother also taints his attitude to others. He is full of derision for the foolish courtier Polonius, disloyal friends like Rosencrantz and Guildenster and the 'waterfly' Osric, to the extent that he equates Ophelia with Gertrude condemning the whole womankind to be unchaste. While denying Hamlet to be a melancholic cynic, Sengupta feels that Hamlet has nevertheless lost all interest in life when "man delights him not nor woman either." But that doesn't turn him into a melancholic man when he has the Renaissance hero's love for the good things of life, being physically and mentally agile and also full of moral idealism. Sengupta points out that on four occasions Hamlet acts swiftly and decisively. He successfully stages the play to test the truth of the Ghosts words; he kills Polonius; he outwits Claudius and gets Rosencrantz and Guildenstern executed in England and most importantly he slays Claudius at the end. According to Sengupta the killing of Polonius

and Claudius are sporadic acts and are outlets for his repressed energies not surprising for a man poisoned by aversion. But the other two exploits of staging the play and foiling the king's plan of sending Hamlet to his death are the results of cool deliberation, and in both these cases his aversion is under a temporary eclipse. In producing the play he becomes his own self, returning to the creativity within him. Again while sailing off to England he escapes from the prison of Denmark and out of the mental state of aversion, which continues to oppress him in his home country.

Sengupta then proceeds to make a running survey of the whole play to discuss the tragedy of Hamlet and its root cause that he claims to be aversion. On encountering the Ghost in the first act Hamlet suddenly decides on assuming madness, which actually hinders his cause of revenge but enables him to express his disgust for life and the world outside. Hamlet's initial suspicion of the Ghost to be a goblin reflects the instability of a mind infected with aversion. In the second act, his aversion has deepened but he wakes up from his stupor and stages the play to test the king's conscience. The staging of the drama transports him to the world of imagination and the prospect of exposing Claudius invigorates him. This act also deals with his relation with Ophelia, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. All three of them only serve to disappoint him further and thus become excitants or determinants (*vibhavas*) of his mental state of aversion. In the third act his pessimism is intensified which is noticed in his meditation –"To be or not to be" as also in his brutalities to Ophelia. In Act IV Hamlet's disgust with life is leading to a kind of philosophical detachment. For him death seems to be the only reality now and man exists just to be a food for worms. From this viewpoint the destiny of a king and that of a beggar are the same.

Sengupta finally dwells on two significant instances of *dhvani* worth noting in the play. Hamlet's avowal of his deep love for Ophelia being more than forty thousand brothers does not seem to be in tune with his harsh treatment of her in the earlier part of the play. According to Sengupta, the truth is that his berating of Ophelia is the result of his shattered image of ideal love caused by Gertrude and which Ophelia has done nothing to revive. It is because Hamlet loves her so intensely that he wants her to stay away from the corrupting influences of the outside world. Sengupta points out that Hamlet's chastisising of Ophelia is different from the ridicule he pours on Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to whom he speaks with a distance. Another instance of *dhvani* lies in the gravediggers' scene. The clowns play at loggats with the bones of the dead, as they have no feeling of their business. The qestion is, points out Sengupta, did Hamlet himself have a feeling of his own business when his behaviour drove Ophelia to madness and death? This is the implicit irony in that scene.

Sengupta concludes that *Hamlet* is not a play about a mission delayed but about a complex state of mind predominated by aversion. He writes:

> Keeping as far as we can to the Indian system of criticism, we may say that in Hamlet, the predominant state is aversion (jugupsa), but it is strengthened and enriched by the mental states, and the total effect is not merely revolting (vibhatsa) but tragic—a concept for which there is nothing corresponding in Indian poetics.[13]

But I argue that aversion (*jugupsa*) is not the single predominant emotion nor is *bibhatsa* the only primary *rasa.* (I use the term "emotion" to denote both *rasa* and its corresponding emotion *bhava*, page 83). Closely associated with *bibhatsa* (aversion) is *vira rasa* or heroism. The Ghost's communication arouses Hamlet's disgust for both the king and the queen and also a firm determination to take revenge upon the king by

murdering him, the obvious sign of heroism in Hamlet. And *karuna rasa* or sorrow is unmistakably another central emotion. Sengupta's idea that the concept of tragedy is alien to the Indian dramatic tradition is undoubtedly true, but the absence of this concept in Indian tradition is not due to any aesthetic inadequacy, rather, significantly, due to the Indian worldview that, although suffering is an inevitable part of human life, the end is absolute bliss, that is, the very origin of life as a whole. The Upanishadic voice that "Life as a whole emerges from bliss, subsists in bliss and finally immerses into bliss" is the authority here.[14] Death is therefore not a tragedy, particularly, the death of a hero in the battlefield leads to an elevated heavenly life. As the *Geeta* says:

> Slain [in the battle-field], you will obtain heaven;
> Victorious you will enjoy the earth [worldly happiness].
>
> (ii: 37)

So, Hamlet, being slain in battle, is a real hero in the Sanskrit sense of the term *vira* (hero). Hamlet's death is certainly not caused due to any instability or weakness of character he suffers from. Like a true *vira* he is firm upon his decision and faces adversities like a true *vira* should face, finally accomplishing his mission of killing the king. His death can be compared with the Indian concept of *viragati* i.e. the end of a true hero.

In the case of Hamlet, it is a dual victory. He doesn't elevate his enemy (Claudius) to get a divine status by slaying him at his prayer. At the right time he kills the king and takes appropriate revenge. And he is himself elevated to a higher kind of life—the life in death by being himself slain. He doesn't repent although Laertes repents and in the confession and repentance of Laertes, Hamlet's *viragati* is doubly asserted. Hamlet's

success is therefore a double one—because he kills his enemy and regains the friendship of Laertes who regrets that being misguided by the villain, he has killed Hamlet. As Abhinavagupta writes, “heroism is the nature of persons with good qualities, enthusiasm of these good people is always delightful.”[15] He further observes that heroism is the effect of one’s physical strength and commitment to moral principles such as control of sense organs and proper consideration of the legal instructions. Abhinavagupta cites the examples of Rama (in the epic *Ramayana*) and Udayana (in *Swapnavasavadutta*, see footnote on page 178) who had all these qualities in abundance. By virtue of their goodness they were also able to earn the goodwill and support of the public bureaucrats as well as politicians. They had great patience, tolerance, ability for sacrifice of the coveted things, attaining the goal of life and also appropriate skill for fighting in the battlefield. Considering these factors, Hamlet would be the most befitting character of this category. The best example for his control of sense organs is his suspension of his attachment or passion for Ophelia. At the same time, his patience for waiting for a proper occasion and opportunity to slay the king and his decision not to do it at his prayer are all coming under the qualities of a character of heroism that Abhinavagupta and Bharata[xv] decide.

The *vira rasa* displayed in a *dhiroddhata* (the brave and haughty) character like Bhima in *Venisamhara* can be cited here. The play *Venisamhara* by Bhattanaryana (7th century A.D.), deals with the conflict for kingship between the two royal families of Hastinapur. In the first group are the Pandavas—Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva. The other group who are the cousins of the Pandavas are called the Kauravas.

[xv] Abhinavagupta is the commentator of Bharata’s *Natysastra*.

They are a hundred brothers in all, the eldest being Duryodhana. Though Yudhisthira is crowned as the king of Hastinapur, Duryodhana considers himself to be the rightful heir. So he challenges Yudhisthira for a game of dice for which the latter has a passion. Using deceit, Duryodhana constantly defeats him in every round. In this bait, Yudhisthira starts losing all his property and his entire kingdom. Continuing to be goaded by Duryodhana's mocking challenges, he starts baiting his younger brothers, one after the other and finally his wife, Draupadi. This was Duryodhana's trump card as he had previously desired to marry Draupadi but had been rejected by her. In order to salvage his bruised ego, he takes up this opportunity to publicly humiliate Draupadi. So he orders his younger brother, who is the strongest among the Kauravas to fetch Draupadi from the inner chambers of the palace. Not taking heed of Draupadi's pleadings, he drags her by the hair from her chamber. Her long braid falls loose while she is being dragged. At Duryodhana's command, Dushasana tries to undress her in the presence of others, but fails to do so due to Lord Krishna's benevolence on Draupadi. Not being able to swallow this humiliation, the outraged Draupadi pledges never to braid her hair again until it is washed with Dushasana's blood. Bhima is the one most affected by this sight and swears to take revenge on Dushasana for this vile deed.

The Pandavas are exiled for thirteen years at Duryodhana's command, after which they are supposed to get back their kingdom. But Duryodhana does not keep his promise and challenges them for a war. So a war is inevitable, which is called the battle of the *Mahabharata* (pages 127-128). In this historic event, Bhima combats with Dushasana who are considered equals in strength and mace fighting. After a long struggle Bhima finally succeeds in slaying Dushasana. In order to keep his vow, he carries Dushasana's

blood and smears it on Draupadi's hair. Being thus pacified, Draupadi finally braids her hair. The agony of the Kauravas causes *karuna rasa* (sorrow).

Bhima's bravery and heroism have been much glorified by Bhattanarayana in this drama. It was only Bhima who had the courage to challenge Dushasana who had no match and was considered invincible till then. Having captured Dushasana he challenged all the heroes of the Kauravas to save Dushasana from his clutch. This challenge that nobody is able to meet is expressive of *vira rasa* par excellence. In the final scene of *Hamlet*, although this kind of explosive heroism is not displayed, Hamlet's skilful operation in hitting Laertes as also the king is undoubtedly an ideal display of *vira rasa*. But *vira rasa* in its completeness is the absolute victory of the hero where he kills the enemy and remains invincible. Hamlet being slain in the drama concerned, the Sanskrit *vira rasa* is not accomplished ideally. This therefore results in *karuna rasa*. The situation can be fruitfully compared with the slaying of Abhimanyu in the battle of the *Mahabharata*. Abhimanyu, the son of Arjuna, though only sixteen, was a skilled fighter as he had learnt the skill of the *Chakravyuha* (an infantry circle formed like a wheel) from his maternal uncle, Lord Krishna who had been narrating this skill to his sister Subhadra, while Abhimanyu was in her womb. Abhimanyu, having killed several heroes in the great battle, is killed treacherously the way not permitted by the laws of war i.e. one warrior attacked by seven warriors at a time. Fighthing valiantly till his last breath he finally succumbs to the onslaught of his enemies. This display is undoubtedly heroic but causes *karuna* (sorrow) because of the death of the hero. The *Bhagavad Geeta* says that a warrior doesn't die in the battlefield but is rather slain there having put up a valiant fight, and gets promoted to heaven (*Geeta* ii: 32, 37). Nevertheless from an aesthetic point of

view, this death doesn't save the occasion from pathos, particularly when a righteous warrior having killed several villains is finally himself slain, the result being the sorrow of the warrior's own kinsmen and the onlookers or public. In this instance, instead of *vira rasa*, it is *karuna*, which is finally stimulated. So also is the case of Hamlet. Hamlet kills the real villain, the king, and another righteous man Laertes behaving like a villain at the instigation of the real villain. But his own death predominates over *vira rasa* and results finally in *karuna*. Abhinavagupta writes that when "the adverse situation of a righteous man is seen or heard, it produces *karuna rasa*."[16] This adverse situation is explained as loss of wealth…. ending even in death. Thus the situation of Hamlet can appropriately be appreciated as a *karuna rasa*, *vira rasa* being hampered by his death. As the ending of each play is crucial for a final impression (page 95) it wouldn't be contradictory to select *karuna rasa* to be the final predominating emotion.

The demerit of *Hamlet* in generating *rasa* is its mixing of several emotions in such a complex form that it puts the viewer in confusion as to the predominance of a particular emotion. There are fear, disgust, courage, and sorrow. Fear, though a secondary emotion in the play appears too frequently. A secondary emotion according to the *rasa* theorists should not gain much prominence (see discussion on pages 94-95). The other three *rasas* of disgust, courage and sorrow are produced in equal measures. So, the question as regards the predominance of one single emotion running throughout the play as stressed by the Sanskrit critics is open for debate. It is not a tragedy of a plain tragic structure. In the confusion of *bibhatsa* (disgust), *vira* (heroism) and *karuna* (sorrow), although *karuna* finally prevails, till the end, the spectator is put in confusion, as to the predominance of the *rasa* it purports to present.

6.4 *Hamlet* and the *Dhvani* Theory

Having thus considered the *rasa* structure of *Hamlet*, I proceed to analyse the *dhvani* structure of the play. Since the play ends in the experience of sorrow, it is *karuna rasa* which dominates it, owing to the death of the hero in the final scene. Nevertheless the second dominating *rasa*, *vira* has played its role most effectively. Hamlet's heroism excels throughout and though *karuna* is generated by his death it is *vira*, which is sustained throughout, and the death of Hamlet rather elevates his heroism. This bright side of Hamlet in all respects of life is already revealed in Act I scene ii: 66-67. While the king apprehends a feeling of melancholy and weakness in Hamlet, the hero is bold enough to forecast his bright heroism:

> King Claudius. How is it that the clouds still hang on you?
> Hamlet. Not so, my lord, I am too much i' th' sun.

Hamlet's confidence that he has no clouds around him, rather he is too much under the sun is a clear *dhvani* expression sufficiently meaningful for the audience that the aim and objective of the hero are quite clear. This technique of *dhvani* can be compared with the *dhvani* structure of the *Ramayana* (pages 121-122). After cursing the hunter who had shot down the crane, sage Valmiki was still not relieved. The experience of sorrow loomed heavily upon him for quite a long time, until he was finally advised by the divine sage Narada to compose a poem on Shri Ramachandra, the incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Valmiki wrote a poem the principal *rasa* of which was *karuna*, though it was associated with *vira* due to the heroic adventures of the main character, Shri Ram. The event and the curse itself serve as a *dhvani* for the dominating *rasa* of the poem that the poet Valmiki

had to compose. Similarly in *Hamlet*, the very speeches quoted above serve as a *dhvani* for the whole of the play. These two speeches in their tertiary or trancendental meaning or *dhvani* (page 108) reveal that Hamlet is extremely self-conscious or aware, wise, confident and optimistic about his own existence and the course of action that he takes up for the future. But the king with his arrogance, hypocrisy and criminality is unable to understand him properly. Hamlet remains invincible throughout the play. In fact he suffers no defeat. *Karuna* arises due to the death of the hero that he has not deserved.

The second point of *dhvani* is Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost. In Act I scene v: line 4, Hamlet pities the Ghost, but the situation demands that he should actually pity his own self and this is the meaning, when the Ghost answers, "Pity me not…."

> Ghost …I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
> Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,
> Thy knotty and combinèd locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand on end
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.
>
> (I v: 15-20)

This speech of the Ghost is an example of *dhvani* for the dominating *vira rasa* running through the whole play. The Ghost encourages Hamlet as Lord Krishna encourages Arjuna in the battlefield of the *Mahabharata*. It is Hamlet's conscience and finally his guru to whom Hamlet surrenders as Arjuna surrenders to Lord Krishna uttering the words "O Lord Krishna, I am your disciple and you instruct me who has surrendered completely to you" (*Geeta* ii: 7). The situation also reveals that human life is a battlefield and that each and every man is a hero to overcome the obstacles and adversities even at the cost of his life. He who does this always wins the battle either by dying or by surviving. Both ways he is a winner and a hero. In his heroic pattern of life, love appears only as a

subsidiary one. In the heroic epics, it is love, which stimulates heroism. But in a drama where the essentials of life are represented, where the realities of human life are to be displayed, love is to be dominated over by the heroic purposes of life. It is not that a hero has no passion or love and that he is insensitive to love, but the truth is that for a hero fighting in the battlefield of life, love appears to be a secondary emotion, heroism being primary in his character. Thus, the realistic epic of the *Mahabharata* poses love as a secondary emotion, heroism being the primary. And Lord Krishna pleads for this domination of heroism in the *Bhagavad Geeta*. A man is to be active all through, never inactive, irrespective of his success or failure in life. Lord Krishna specifies the qualities of a *sattvic karta* or that an ideal hero (doer) is always free from attachment to the result of his action, indifferent to success and to failure, without any sense of arrogance and always with patience and enthusiasm (*Geeta* xviii: 26). Thus Hamlet's main aim is to accomplish the action and like the true disciple of Lord Krishna, he never suffers from inertia although only apparently he criticizes himself in the two soliloquies quoted earlier. A hero's suspension of the passion of love for the sake of his heroic achievement is revealed in his attitude to Ophelia. Polonius' conjecture that Hamlet is mad in love is a *dhvani* of his own insanity only. When he utters, "that he is mad,'t is true, 'tis true'tis pity; And pity' tis'tis true," (II ii: 98-99) the audience is clearly pitying Polonius himself. The irony of Polonius' speech is only applicable to himself, not to Hamlet at all. Polonius' pitiful situation is revealed in several speeches between Hamlet and Polonius (II ii: 182-183). For example:

> Hamlet For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog, being a good
> kissing carrion-- have you a daughter?

The primary or superficial (denotational) meaning (page 108) of this speech is carrion, a carcass. The secondary meaning referred to (*lakshyartha*) is live flesh and especially flesh contemptuously regarded as available for sexual pleasure. The third or tertiary meaning (*dhvani*) means Ophelia and what may happen to her i.e if Ophelia's love is going to be fruitless. And perhaps also Shakespeare wants to say that Ophelia will end up as a carcass by dying ultimately:

> Hamlet Let her not walk i'th' sun. Conception is a blessing,
> but not as your daughter may conceive. Friend, look to 't.
>
> (II ii: 185-186)

Further in Hamlet's speech he asks Ophelia to be kept out of the sun in its literal (primary) sense. In its secondary meaning, *lakshyartha*, she is to be kept out of public view and the third meaning or *dhvani* is that Ophelia is to be kept away from Hamlet. In the famous soliloquy, "To be or not to be…" Hamlet prefers suffering to death implying his preference to heroism and suffering of any kind whatsoever it may be -- obviously suffering even due to reflection of love, "The pangs of disprized love …"(III i: 74).

Finally coming to his encounter with Ophelia, his apparent misbehaviour with her is an ambivalent gesture implying his disgust with his mother as representing the whole race of women including Ophelia. His address to Ophelia embedded with harsh and offensive abuses like "Get thee to a nunnery" (III i: 122-130) etc. has been interpreted variously by the critics. It certainly puts the audience to a confusion regarding the sincerity of Hamlet's love for Ophelia, who takes his offensive behaviour literally and feels terribly hurt and disappointed, a situation which finally leads her to suicide. T.S. Eliot's famous objection that Shakespeare was unable to find a proper objective correlative for an expression of disgust has been analysed by A.C. Sukla in a strong

defensive argument.[17] He thinks that Hamlet's unpalatable behaviour with Ophelia is a category of *rasa-dhvani*, which reveals his love for her.[18] His behaviour or *anubhava* actually reveals (*dhvani*) his love for Ophelia. Hamlet is no doubt filled with an utter disgust for women in general. He has also expressed this in his behaviour with Gertrude, but the difference is that; his *anubhava* is literal (*abhidha*) in the case of Gertrude in such instances like:

> Hamlet : Such an act
>
> That blurs the grace and blush of modesty…
>
> (III iv: 40)

and:

> Hamlet. Frailty , thy name is woman…
>
> (I ii: 146)

Contrastingly his behaviour with Ophelia is of a *dhvani* category. Sukla suggests that the harsh and offensive words used by Hamlet for Ophelia reveal his love for her, rather than his disgust with her. Hamlet is not disgusted with Ophelia directly as he is with Gertrude. Since he is constrained in expressing his agony and anguish before everybody other than his mother, he tacitly accepts Ophelia as the only other person before whom he should express himself. Thus, concludes Sukla, this apparent misbehaviour with Ophelia reveals his love for her and *sringara rasa* (love) is revealed by this *dhvani* technique. This is an instance of *rasa-dhvani* (pages 122-123). Sukla gives the simplest example of a similar situation from common life. Children's anger and defiance with the mother are only indicative of their love for her and not real anger or disgust. It is only with a person of

one's sincere love and intimacy that one expresses one's anguish. Following Sukla's line of thought one can argue that when Hamlet fails to accept Gertrude who is the right person before whom he could express his agony, since she is the culprit herself in joining hands with his father's murderer, it is impossible on his part to accept her as an intimate partner for sharing his grief. The only alternative partner is obviously Ophelia. Hamlet's behaviour being poetically most appropriate, it is Ophelia's lack of sensibility that she fails to appreciate Hamlet's predicament. However, Hamlet's love for Ophelia is beyond any doubt. And thus she speaks, "Fare you well, my dove" (IV v: 166). Dove (perhaps referring to Hamlet) being the symbol of the Holy Spirit is the *dhvani* expression for the sacredness of love, a case of *dhvani* based on *lakshana* (metaphor).

A closely parallel idea is to be found in Peter Alexander's *Shakespeare's Life and Art* where he quotes Charles Lamb's justification of Hamlet's apparent cruelty to the innocent Ophelia:

> The truth is, that in all such deep affections as had subsisted between Hamlet and Ophelia, there is a stock of supererogarory love, (if I may venture to use the expression) which in any great grief of heart, especially where that which preys upon the mind cannot be communicated, confers a kind of indulgence upon the grieved party to express itself, even to its heart's dearest object, in the language of temporary alienation.[19]

Alexander again quotes Samuel Taylor Coleridge who echoes a similar thought when he says that "he [Hamlet] at last must needs express his love's excess with words of unmeant bitterness."[20]

After Ophelia's sorrowful death Hamlet's intuitive speech is of ironical strength:

> Hamlet.We defy augury. There's a special providence in
> the fall of a sparrow. If it be now,'tis not to come. If it be not
> to come, it will be now. If it be not now, yet it will come.The

> readiness is all. Since no man, has aught of what he leaves, what
> is't to leave betimes?
>
> (V ii: 157-161)

The hero is prepared for any eventuality. The realization and conviction of Hamlet can be compared to Krishna's instructions that a hero should never fear death as fighting against evil is the noblest deed of a hero; the phenomenal success and failure are all the same. A heroic death is as good as a heavenly existence. Therefore a hero should fight for the sake of fighting.

I have approached the study of *Hamlet* from four distinct perspectives not necessarily interlinked with each other. Not strictly a dramaturgical interpretation, the *Geeta* viewpoint can be broadly subsumed under the chapeau of an Indian interpretation owing to its distinctive influence on classical as well as contemporary Indian thought and culture. In studying *Hamlet* from this didactic point of view, one finds analogies between the character and situation of Hamlet and that of Arjuna, a chief figure in the *Bhagavad Geeta*. The striking parallels between Arjuna and Hamlet not only make interesting study but leave no ambiguity in allocating Hamlet to a character type as elucidated in this holy scripture. Based on the philosophic theory of action, I conclude him to be of the *Rajasic* type as someone who feels demotivated in exercising what he acknowledges to be his filial duty.

Moving on to the dramaturgical perspective, it is clearly discernible that the structure of *Hamlet* conforms to the Sanskrit pattern of drama. *Hamlet* can be divided into five different stages corresponding to the plot of a Sanskrit play. It is a *Prakarana* (see page 142) kind of play, where the hero is not a famous historical, legendary or mythical figure but purely fictitious. However the character Hamlet does not strictly belong to any

male classification of the hero of Sanskrit plays and presents a fusion of *dhiralalita* & *dhiraprasanta* (see page 142) simultaneously representing courage, sensitivity, conscientiousness and a serious demeanour.

Entering the core of the thesis, I move on to the phenomenology of theatrical performance as propounded by sage Bharata, the *Rasa* theory. Following a detailed scene by scene reading of *Hamlet*, one is tempted, in the beginning, to deduce that disgust or *vibhatsa* is the dominating emotion. Then *vira rasa* or heroism, which had already appeared in dmall doses earlier, gradually becomes more and more intense and finally supercedes disgust. But the tragic turn at the end of the play blocks the culmination of *vira rasa* and replaces it with *karuna rasa* or sorrow. Since the ending of a play is crucial for a final impression according to the Sanskrit canon, *Hamlet* cannot fall into the recommended pattern of being classified as one kind of play presenting one dominant emotion.

I have included a *dhvani* interpretation of *Hamlet* as a means of giving more insight into passages that are ironical and ambiguous. The superficial meanings of these passages act as a camouflage to the hidden and more potent layers of meanings. These peripheral meanings sometimes stand in sharp contrast to the deeper meanings as in Hamlet's cruel words directed to Ophelia "Get thee to a nunnery… (see discussion on page 191-193). A shallow reading would create doubts in the mind of the reader of Hamlet's love for Ophelia, but a careful scrutiny actually reveals his love for her. These varied meanings in different passages can have a significant effect on the *rasa* produced.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the eventual outcome of the dramatic spectacle is *rasa*. The *rasa* produced can be dependent on several factors. One means of

producing *rasa* is *dhvani*, but *dhvani* appeals only to a higher sensibility and may be lost to some. While being a powerful potent in producing *rasa*, *dhvani* does not necessarily create the desired effect as it may fail to reach all levels of the audience. If *dhvani* remains unrevealed in the dialogues, the resulting *rasa* may be totally different from the same dialogue where *dhvani* gets revealed. So *dhvani* obviously plays a vital role in determining the *rasa* produced. Much also depends on the mind conditioning and thought process of the viewers. This is where the *Bhagavad Geeta* comes in playing a relatively important role in creating *rasa* in the (Indian) audience. The *Geeta* interpretation is not a dramaturgical interpretation but might be relevant in determining the nature of the *rasa* produced. Like the *Bhagavad Geeta* there could be numerous other influencing factors depending on the socio-cultural background of an individual. Again, the *rasa* produced could vary from individual to individual depending on his or her personal experience and mode of thinking. So while it is sometimes possible to determine and generalise the *rasas* produced in a play, in many cases they could widely differ depending on one's individual character, personal perspective and socio-cultural environment.

7 CONCLUSION

Shakespeare came to India with the introduction of English education in the early nineteenth century after the British rule was firmly established. But there was an intense debate amongst the colonial masters (Orientalists vs. Anglicists) in the early phase of the British rule about the wisdom and utility of the introduction of the English language in a society rich in cultural heritage and history. The Christian missionaries were to a large extent instrumental in the introduction of the language. The colonialists, however, found the language to be eagerly accepted by an emerging influential middle class. The two types of educational institutions—the schools and colleges run by the Government and those run by the Christian missionaries that initially imparted English education to their students prescribed different sets of textbooks for English literature. Towards the latter part of the nineteenth century, non-government educational institutions not run by missionaries started appearing in the Indian educational world and those institutions also imparted English education with different curricula. All the three types of institutions with different social and political objectives had Shakespeare's works included in their courses of studies, as these were considered universal. The question of retaining English in education and in administration was again debated after India became independent, but finally the option of English education was retained. Shakespeare's popularity in the post-Raj period remains as high as before.

Throughout the whole of the colonial and the post-colonial period of far-reaching political and cultural transitions, extending over about two centuries, Shakespeare had maximum impact on the Indian literary and cultural circles. This impact is, in fact intertwined with the larger questions of politics and culture.

Right from the beginning a small class of English educated Indians have accepted, without question, the Western literary canons and "made Shakespeare the epitome, test and symbol of literary culture."[1] This group has almost apotheosized Shakespeare and this tendency continues to some extent even today in Indian academia. If, however, we go beyond the English literary circles, into the world of translations and performances in various regional Indian languages one experiences a complex reception. Shakespeare seems to have been more indigenized/Indianized through successful appropriations and negotiations in various translations and stage (and screen) adaptations. The story values of Shakespeare's dramas—more than the moral and cultural values were particularly popular amongst the Indian audience in the adaptations. The parallelisms of some dramas with those of some Indian epics were particularly attractive.

Although the primary motivation of adapting/translating Shakespeare on stage or in publication was to present to the Indian masses, not knowing English, the specimens of English literature already accepted by the English educated as examples of superior literature, the social and political objectives of the adaptors/translators were also kept in view. While to some this was to uplift Indian culture, others wanted to use Shakespeare for social reforms. For these many appropriations and negotiations had to be done. In some cases the title of the play, names of characters and their costumes were changed to Indian ones. All references to Western behaviour and culture were replaced

by Indian equivalents. In many cases tragic endings were changed to more acceptable happy ones. In this way the original dramatic form and the foreign origin were concealed. But it was not intended to eliminate the original genre. Similarly, for some others, particularly in the Parsi theatres, the external features of the Shakespearean plays were retained but not caring for their philosophical or moral aspects. The objective was to create entertainment through spectacle and grandeur. Experimenting with Shakespearean plays for greater acceptability and for social and political objectives takes place even today. The extent and types of negotiations carried out in the different regional languages varied from region to region depending upon their cultural status and history.

Overall, Indian writers/translators and dramatists have created a clear space for Shakespeare in the Indian cultural scene but he (Shakespeare) exists as two distinctly different and hierarchical figures—the Shakespeare in the English language and the Shakespeare in the Indian native world. The first Shakespeare exists in the English classrooms in a more "purist" form, but the other has a wider area of operation.

The reception of Shakespeare in India in English literary studies and in the various regional languages and performances is described in Chapters 2 and 3. The fourth chapter discusses the reasons behind the enormous popularity of Shakespeare in general and *Hamlet* in particular. The extent and complexity of Shakespeare's reception in India provides an incentive for an interesting cross-cultural experiment through the present study of interpreting his drama, *Hamlet,* from the perspective of the classical Indian tradition of dramatic criticism.

In the fifth chapter I have surveyed and interpreted the critical perspectives of the *rasa-dhvani* theory, which is pivotal in Sanskrit critical tradition. The theory took several centuries—from Bharata to Abhinavagupta for its complete growth. The theoretical sophistication of Sanskrit thought as reflected in the theory of *rasa-dhvani* has been discussed in this chapter. Whereas the *rasa* theory is associated with the epistemological and ontological aspects of the theatrical experience, the *rasa-dhvani* theory explains the nature of the literary art in both of its perspectives--linguistic and ontological. The linguistic medium of literature is of such specific character that it is qualified for generating *rasa* for aesthetic experience, which is on par with the theatrical experience. *Rasa* is generated in the theatre by the four kinds of *abhinaya*: physical, linguistic, psychic and visual, whereas the same is generated in literature by the presentation of the determinants etc. through the *vyanjana* potency of language. I have distinguished and analysed this potency in elaborating the *dhvani* theory along with the different categories of this theory, among which the *rasa-dhvani* theory is the central one.

The sixth chapter studies the play of *Hamlet* in the light of this *rasa-dhvani* theory. Obviously, Hamlet has been taken up as a literary text and *rasa-dhvani* has been applied in studying this literary text as it is applied in studying all forms of Sanskrit literature such as epic, narrative and drama. I have also focussed on the Indian philosophy of action highlighting particularly the doctrines of the *Bhagavad Geeta*—a text that forms the very foundations of the philosophy of action. Taking a lesson from Krishna's voice that each and everyone should perform action suitable for his own social division, I study the character and actions of Hamlet most suitably as that of a *Kshatriya* (warrior class). In my interpretation, Hamlet is a *Kshatriya* hero of a *dhiralalita* and a

dhira-prasanta type (page 141) who is young, conscientious, generous and sensitive. He is determined to avenge the murder of his father and waits for a proper time and situation. Ultimately he is successful though at the cost of his own life. I have explored that it is a heroic (*vira*) emotion that is dominating, and the tragic character of Hamlet's end is necessarily *karuna* (sorrow) justified by Bharata's authority. I have disagreed with Prof. S.C. Sengupta (the pioneering critic of *Hamlet*) in the light of the *rasa-dhvani* theory that aversion is not the dominant emotion causing aesthetic sorrow. I have also explored that the subsidiary emotion of love (for Ophelia) and aversion (for Gertrude) are revealed through the language of *vyanjana*. Shakespeare's literary talent has skilfully manipulated situations, characters and events in expressing the central emotion that results in the desired *rasa*(s).

The present thesis, therefore, breaks ground for further studies by scholars in India and abroad on different aspects of English literature in general and Shakespeare, in particular. What has been said in this thesis is not, however, any final word. It is the method that is the most important. Historical evidence and theoretical strength have been the principal tools in justifying this method, whereas the analysis has been hopefully logical and convincing.

Future scholars will be encouraged to study the major tragedies of Shakespeare in the light of the *rasa-dhvani* theory. They will investigate the dominant emotions in other tragedies that cause sorrow or the aesthetic emotion of *karuna rasa*, at the end of a tragedy viewed by Western critics since Aristotle. Lear, Macbeth and Othello are not heroes like Hamlet. Their sufferings due to their respective weaknesses might be appreciated in the light of *dhvani* situations they face and experience. Lear's self-conceit

debarring him from perceiving the truth of life, Othello's lack of patience in testing the strength of love and Macbeth's infatuation for power destroying his human conscience might be studied as instrumental in causing their tragic end in the light of the theories of Bharata, Anandavardhana and their commentator Abhinavagupta.

As already discussed, Shakespeare came to India and was later naturalised because of the historical consequence of colonisation of India by the British. There are many Indian epics like the *Mahabharata* and literary works of poets like Kalidasa of the classic period (up to 12th century A.D.), which are of no less universal significance than the works of Shakespeare. These works have not been adequately exposed in Western literary circles because of historic asymmetry. Introducing such fine specimens of art will offer a fertile ground for further explorations. A major step in this direction is Peter Brook's celebrated nine-hour stage production of the *Mahabharata* in the year 1985 that emphasises the nature of the epic as a universal story of all humanity. Brook's later screen presentation of the epic in 1989 was given an added universal dimension through its widely varied international cast. A true multiculturalism will result if such efforts continue and if those literary works are also studied in the light of Western aesthetics.

Notes

1. Introduction

[1] Sisir Kumar Das, *Indian Ode to the West Wind*, 52.

[2] "Bibliography of Shakespeare's Plays in Indian Languages," *A Tribute to Shakespeare*, 69-74.

[3] Emily Eden, *Letters from India*, 1837-40, 264-65, as quoted in Jyotshna Singh, *Colonial Narratives*,120.

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